

A  
C O U R S E  
OF THE  
BELLES LETTRES:  
OR THE  
P R I N C I P L E S  
O F  
L I T E R A T U R E.

Translated from the French of the

ABBOT BATTEUX, K.

Professor of RHETORIC in the Royal College of  
NAVARRE, at PARIS.

By Mr. M I L L E R.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for B. LAW and Co. T. CASLON, J. COOTE,  
S. HOOPER, G. KEARSLEY, and A. MORLEY.

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M DCC LXI.



COURSE  
 OF THE  
 BELLES LETTRES  
 OR THE  
 PRINCIPLES  
 OF  
 LITERATURE.



AND  
 THE  
 HISTORY OF LITERATURE IN THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF  
 NATURAL HISTORY, PARIS.

BY MR. M. J. L. E. R.  
 IN FOUR VOLUMES.  
 VOL. I.

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 S. Hoare, G. Kearney, and A. Morrison.

W. DODD.



TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
FRANCIS, EARL OF HUNTINGDON;  
BARON HASTINGS;

Master of the Horse to the KING, and one of his  
MAJESTY'S most honourable Privy Council.

MY LORD,



It has been the peculiar privilege of the great and noble, in all ages, to be the encouragers of learning, and the patrons and protectors of its sons;

A 2 this,

ii DEDICATION.

this, and my knowledge of the early instances your Lordship gave of that taste for polite literature, for which your riper years have since been distinguished, determined me to shelter this translation under the auspices of a name, which cannot fail of giving it an additional degree of merit with the learned and polite ; and I am confident, that the author, whom I now present to the public in an English dress, will think himself not a little indebted to me for the share he will have in the honor of such a patronage. I

I might here indulge myself, my Lord, in the enumeration of those many amiable accomplishments

ments, for which you are justly esteemed in your own nation, and by which you have done an honour to your country among foreigners; but the early and distinguished marks of approbation conferred on you by our illustrious young monarch, who is no less admired for his discernment, than beloved for his virtues, form a panegyric above all addition.

I shall therefore only beg leave to return your Lordship my thanks, for the honour you have done me, in permitting me to prefix your name to this work; and to assure your Lordship, that it is my most fervent wish, that

JOHN MILLER. you



iv DEDICATION

you may long continue the favorite of your Sovereign, and the ornament of a court, that bids fair to stand conspicuous to posterity, for every shining virtue.

I am, with the greatest respect,

My LORD,

your Lordship's most obedient,

and most devoted humble servant,

Chelsea, Feb. 27  
1761.

JOHN MILLER.

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THE  
AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

**W**E every day hear complaints of the great multitude of rules for production, the number of which equally confuse the author in his composition, and the lover of learning in his judgment. We shall endeavour to avoid, as much as possible, running into this error; our design being to shorten the road to Literature, and render it more plain and simple.

The multiplicity of rules proceed from the number of observations on works of all kinds. Now the only way to abridge them, is by reducing these observations to their first elements; imitating in this a good physician, who collects a number of experiments, on which he forms one system, which reduces them to a single principle.

We abound in observations: it is a fund which has been continually encreasing from the first rise of the arts, down to the present time; but the richness of this fund is rather a restraint upon us, than an assistance. We read, we study, we thirst after knowledge, yet every thing seems to elude our efforts, on account of the number and con-

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fusion of parts ; which, for want of being duly adjusted and connected with each other, instead of forming a regular and uniform body, make only a rude and lumpish mass.

All these rules are so many branches of the same trunk ; were we to trace them to their source, we should find one principle so simple and uncompounded, as to be comprehended with the greatest readiness and ease, and at the same time so extensive, as to swallow up all the other petty rules, of which it is alone sufficient to have an intuitive knowledge, without perplexing oneself with the theory, which does but burthen the mind, instead of enlightening it. Could we but lay hold of this principle, it would at once prove the standard for all such as have a real genius in the arts, and rid them of a thousand vain and needless scruples, to bring them under one sole and sovereign law, which, when well comprehended, would be the basis, summary, and exposition of all other rules.

I should esteem myself singularly happy, to have this work looked upon only as the sketch or rough draught of so useful a design ; a work which indeed was first undertaken purely to clear up my own ideas : I flatter myself, that the relation of the manner in which this was effected, will not appear altogether useless, to such of my readers,

ders, as chance to be in the same situation with myself at that time. It was poetry that first gave rise to it.

Having studied the poets in the usual method, viz. in the best editions, and with the best commentators; I proposed to proceed to other subjects, but by the way judged it highly necessary, before I changed my objects, to digest in a regular manner such lights as I had already gained, and to enter into an account with myself on the fruits I had reaped from my labors.

Now in order to begin by a clear idea, I put this question to myself: what is poetry? in what does it differ from prose?

I thought I had an answer to this at my fingers ends; how easily is this difference perceived! but here I found it was not sufficient to be sensible of it only, I stood in need of a definition.

And now I plainly perceived, that in the judgments I had hitherto framed of authors, I had been rather led by a kind of instinct, than guided by reason: and was fully sensible of the risks I had run, and the errors I might have fallen into, for want of having properly connected the ideas and grounds of Literature, before I proceeded to form a judgment.

I reproached myself the more sharply for his neglect, as I imagined, that these very principles



principles actually existed in every production wherein the art of poetry was concerned; and that it was wholly owing to want of a proper attention, that I had not remarked them long before.

Upon this I recurr'd to my studies: the first book I opened was Rollin, and under the article of poetry, I found a very learned and sensible discourse upon its origin and intention, which should be wholly to the support of virtue. I found likewise a number of quotations of the most beautiful passages of Homer; and that the author had given very just ideas of the sublime poetry of the sacred writings: but all this while I wanted an exact definition of poetry.

I then bethought myself of having recourse to Dacier, Bossu, and d'Aubignais; and determined to consult afresh the remarks and dissertations of the most celebrated writers on this head: but I was still as much at a loss as ever, meeting only with a set of ideas, like the answers of the oracles of old. *Obscuris vera involvens.* There was a great deal about the divine fire, enthusiasm, raptures, pleasing phrenzy, and such like lofty sounding words, which, though they may astonish the ear, can never speak to the understanding.

After so many fruitless researches, and not daring to venture alone upon a matter,  
which

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v

which on close examination appeared so very obscure and intricate; I bethought myself of opening Aristotle, whose treatise on poetry I had often heard greatly commended, insomuch that I imagined he had been consulted and copied by all the masters in the art; but I soon found that many of them had not so much as read him, and scarce a man of them taken the least thing from him, except indeed here and there a commentator or two; and these, not having formed any proper system for explaining and clearing up the text, afforded me at best but the rudiments of ideas; and besides, these very ideas were in themselves so dull, obscure, and perplexed, that I began almost to despair of meeting any where with a direct answer to the question I had proposed to myself, and which, at first, appeared so very easy to be solved.

However, I found myself struck with the principle of imitation, which the Greek philosopher establishes for the polite arts. I already perceived the justness of it, with respect to painting, which is a mute kind of poetry. I compared this with the ideas of Horace, Boileau, and other great masters; to these I added the several hints I had met with in other writers on this subject, and on trial found the maxim of Horace fully

verified, *Ut Pictura Poësis*; that poetry was throughout an imitation, as well as painting.

I next attempted to make an application of the same principle to music and dancing, or the art of gesture, and was surprized to find how exactly it agreed with them also: and this gave occasion to a little piece, which I published under the title of *Les Beaux Arts réduits à un même Principe*; or, *The Polite Arts reduced to one common Principle*: in which work poetry holds the first rank, not only on account of its own dignity and pre-eminence over the other arts, but as having given occasion to the work itself.

But I imagined that it would be necessary to carry this application yet farther, and shew that it takes place likewise in all the species of Literature. This produced a second piece, which I called *Cours de Belles-Lettres*; or, *A Course of the Belles-Letters*.

The public having already passed their judgment on these two productions, I flatter myself to have complied with its desires, in thus presenting it, with both of them under one title, without any other alterations, than what were necessary for the better connecting the different subjects, and reducing the whole to one uniform piece.

By this new disposition, the work becomes divided into three parts.

In the first, is established the fundamental principle of the polite arts, which are there reduced all to an imitation of nature, agreeable to the taste; that is, an imitation of beautiful nature: and then follows a general application of this principle to poetry, painting, music, and the art of gesture, or dancing.

In the second part, the same principle is applied to narrative poetry, which contains the apologue or fable, pastoral, and the epic; to dramatic poetry, which includes the representation of the marvellous; as opera, tragedy, and comedy: to lyric poetry; which comprehends the ode and its different kinds, and the elegy as a dependant thereon: lastly, to didactic poetry; under which head are comprised the philosophical, historical, and simple didactic, or didactic properly so called; satire, the epistle in verse, and the epigram. And this part concludes with a full and compleat exposition of Horace's art of poetry, which comes in as a kind of voucher, or conclusive proof, of the truth and justness of all that has been before advanced.

In the third and last part, eloquence and its several kinds, oratory, history or narration, and the epistolary stile, are likewise all reduced under proper restrictions to the same principle: and to render the  
treatise



treatise more fully compleat, there are added, by way of appendix, the principle rules for translation, taken from a comparison of the Greek and Latin tongues, with the French, so far as relates to the phrase and construction.

This is the general plan of the work: most of the known rules relating to poetry and eloquence are reduced to one single and common source, viz. the imitation of the TRUE and the BEAUTIFUL, which we have presented us in nature, or the arts; and from hence a system is formed, by the help of which, the mind at once lays hold on the principle and its consequences, as on a well-connected whole, all the parts of which mutually support each other.

In this manner, from an endeavour at first to find out the single definition of poetry, was this work formed; almost without design, and by an imperceptible progression of ideas, of which the first was the germ of all the rest.

I have forborn prefixing the Greek text to the quotations taken from the authors in that language; as young beginners, to whom I chiefly had an eye in this part of the work, would have reaped but little advantage from it; and the rest of my readers stand in no need of it.

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THE  
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

**A**FTER the circumstantial account of this work given by our author in his preface, there would be little left for me to add in quality of translator, had I not hazarded some few alterations and additions of my own; for which I look upon myself as accountable to the public.

The author has, throughout his work, illustrated each subject treated of by suitable examples, from the best writers in the Greek, Latin, and French languages, with critical remarks, pointing out the several beauties or defects of each passage, according to its agreement or non-agreement with the rules for that particular kind of writing. To these he adds, the characters of the most celebrated writers in each species among the three nations.

In order to render these Volumes more immediately useful to the young gentlemen of our own country, I have selected examples in each different branch of writing, from our most celebrated English authors, in the same manner as the Abbot Batteux has done from those of his nation. Thus

in

in the first volume our author, after giving the characters of the best Greek and Latin pastoral writers, adds those of Racan, Segrais, and Madame Deshoulières among the French; with a piece or two from each, as a specimen of their respective manner of writing. To these are subjoined, in the translation, the characters of our most eminent English pastoral writers; viz. Spenser, Philips, Pope, &c.

I thought at first of giving a translation of all the quotations in the course of the work; but upon considering, that the persons for whose uses it is chiefly designed, must the greater part of them necessarily have acquired a knowledge of the Latin and French tongues, previous to their entrance upon the study of the polite arts; I therefore, in some measure, altered my first design, and in its stead have in several places thrown in such passages from our English poets, which appeared to turn upon the same thought with the French quotation in the author; thus they are made to supply the place of a translation, and at the same time afford a kind of parallel between the genius of the two languages, in the different expression of the same sentiment; this method has more particularly taken place under the article of fable and epigram.

I have

I have also, in favour of what I apprehend to be a greater clearness of method, made some alterations in the division of the original into sections, chapters, and articles. The character of the Abbot Batteux is so well established in the republic of letters, that it cannot possibly receive any addition from whatever I could say of it; I shall therefore content myself with observing, that the work before us has been received in the most favourable manner in France, where it has gone through several editions; it has likewise been translated into the German language with equal approbation; and now, for the first time, makes its appearance in an English dress; and when I consider the many beauties and elegancies with which it abounds, I am ready to persuade myself, that the young student will think I offer him no inconsiderable aid in making Monsieur Batteux speak our language.

With respect to myself, as the translator, I hope for the indulgence of the candid and judicious, to whose tribunal I willingly submit; acknowledging, that in many places I have not only made very free with my author, but here and there substituted some passages in the room of the original ones, where I thought it was necessary, in order to adapt the whole more particularly to the meridian of our own nation and language.

As



As to the characters of our English authors, I have in general taken them from some of our biographical writers. In some places I have specified the particular author to whom I have been indebted. But where I have omitted such specification, the reader will easily allow it to be matter of indifference, and no design of attributing to myself another's merit; since I no where pretend to that of originality. Happy if the usefulness of the work in general, may intercede for those imperfections of the translation, which may be justly chargeable to me.

With respect to myself, as the translator, I hope for the indulgence of the candid and judicious, to whose tribunal I willingly submit; acknowledging, that in many places I have not only made very free with my author, but here and there substituted some passages in the room of the original ones. **A**fter I thought it was necessary, in order to adapt the whole more particularly to the

meridian of our own nation and language.

A



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### ERRATA in this Volume.

Page 24. Line 9. for *ramen* read *tamen*. ibid. l. 25. after *sanguine dele cerno*. P. 29. l. 21. *dele* not. P. 35. for ARTICLE I. read CHAP. I. P. 43. for ARTICLE II. read CHAP. III. P. 51. for CHAP. III. read CHAP. IV. P. 65. for CHAP. IV. read CHAP. V. P. 71. l. 18. after *use of* read *so many*. P. 91. l. 18. after *a mixed* read *kind*. P. 108. l. 21. for *early* read *easily*. P. 120. l. 7. after *a verse then* read *is that*. P. 157. l. 2. for *will it do* read *will do it*. P. 179. l. 27. *dele* and P. 197. l. 9. for *with antients* read *with the antients*. P. 236. l. 6. for *this subject* read *his subject*. P. 240. l. 9. *dele* had. P. 244. l. 7. for *word* read *wind*. P. 277. l. 26. for *front* read *first*. P. 294. l. 11. for *enseignervis* read *enseigneris*. P. 299. l. 4. for *fa-ble* read *table*. P. 307. l. 25. for *give in* read *give us*. Ibid. l. 29. for *by be* read *to be*. P. 316. l. 16. for *indispensably* read *indisputably*. P. 318. l. 24. for *couchs* read *conchs*. P. 335. l. 4. for *livals* read *revels*. P. 337. l. 12. for *mighty* read *nightly*. P. 341. l. 15. for *has* read *have*.



THE  
PRINCIPLES  
OF  
LITERATURE.

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PART I.

Wherein the nature of the polite arts, and their common principles are established.

INTRODUCTION.



MOST authors who have undertaken to treat of the polite arts, seem to have shewn more ostentation than exactness or simplicity in the execution. This will evidently appear in the article of poetry. They think they have given us a sufficiently just idea of this art, in telling us that it comprehends all the other arts.



"Poetry say they, is a mixture of painting, music, and eloquence."

"As eloquence it speaks, it proves, it recites. As music it has its regular movement, tones and cadencies; from a dexterous combination of which it forms a kind of concert. As painting it draws out objects, gives them their proper colors, and sets them off in all the elegant shades of nature; it makes use of design and coloring, concords and harmony; it shews us truth, and knows how to make that truth lovely."

"Poetry takes in all kinds of subjects. It avails itself of whatever is most beautiful and striking in history, enters the vast regions of philosophy; transports itself to the heavens to admire the course of the celestial bodies; dives into the deep abyss of waters, and darts into the entrails of the earth, there to examine the most hidden secrets of nature: it penetrates even into the mansions of the dead, to behold the rewards of the just and the punishments of the wicked; in a word, it takes in the whole universe --- nay, if this world seems not sufficient, it creates new ones, which it can at pleasure embellish with enchanted dwellings, and people with a thousand different inhabitants: there forming new beings after its own fancy, it plans in the height of perfection, and refines upon every production of nature. Poetry is a species of magic, which by throwing an agreeable illusion over the eyes, the imagination and the very mind itself, procures us real pleasures by inven-

## OF LITERATURE.

inventions merely chimerical." Thus have the generality of authors spoken of poetry.

Nearly in the same manner have they described the rest of the arts. Full of the merit of those to which they found themselves particularly attached, they have amused us with pompous descriptions in the room of one simple precise definition which was required: or if they have undertaken to define them to us, as such a definition is in its own nature extremely complicated; they have sometimes adopted the accidental for the essential, and the essential for the accidental: nay, some of them drawn away by what I may call author-interest, taking advantage of the natural obscurity of the subject, have presented us with nothing but a set of ideas formed on the model of their own productions.

Our view therefore in this first part is to dispel these clouds, to establish the true principles of the arts, and to fix the clearest and most determinate ideas of them. To this end we have divided it into three sections; in the first of which we examine the nature of arts, their several parts and essential differences, and demonstrate from the known qualities of the human mind, that the imitation of nature is properly the common object of all arts; and that they differ from each other only as to the different means they employ in the execution. Thus colors, sounds and gestures are the means made use of by painting, music and dancing; and speech by poetry; so

that we have at one view the link, or kind of brotherly tye, by which the arts (all equally the children of nature) are united (*a*), tending to one common end, and regulated on the self-same principles; and also the particular differences by which they in other respects are separated and distinguished from each other.

After having established the nature of arts by that of the genius of man which produced them, it was natural to consider in the next place such proofs as were deducible from sentiment; and the more so, as it is the taste that is the only true and original judge (*judex natus*) of all the polite arts; and that even reason herself establishes her rules only with respect to, and in conformity with it. Now if we should find that taste so far agreed with genius, as to concur in prescribing the same rules for all the arts in general and for each in particular, then should we have a new degree of certainty and evidence joined to the former proofs. This is the business of the second section, wherein we prove that a true taste in arts is strictly conformable to the ideas established in the first section; and that the rules of taste are no other than so many consequences naturally arising from the principle of imitation: for if the arts are essen-

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(*a*) Etenim omnes artes quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, & quasi cognatione quâdam inter se continentur. Cicero pro Archia Poëta.

tially imitators of elegant nature, it follows of course that a taste for elegant nature must be the essential characteristic of a true taste in arts; and this conclusion is explained in those articles wherein we shew what taste is, on what it depends, how it is lost, &c. All which articles resolve themselves into a proof of the one general principle of imitation, which comprehends all the rest. These two sections contain the argumentative proofs.

We have added a third section, which includes such farther proofs as arise from the example and conduct of the artists themselves. Here theory will be found illustrated and verified by practice.

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## SECTION I.

The nature of the arts established, by that of the genius which produces them.

IT would be needless to set out with an eulogium upon arts in general. The benefits and advantages accruing from them, sufficiently speak themselves. The whole universe is filled with them. By them were cities built, by them were the dispersed and wandering race of primitive mortals gathered together, polished in their manners, softened in their tempers, and rendered capable of society. And as one kind appears destined to serve, the other to charm, and some to do both at the same time, they are become in



some sort a second order of elements, the creation of which nature had reserved for our own industry.

## CHAP. I.

### The division and origin of arts.

**A**RTS may be divided into three kinds respecting their different ends.

The first have the necessities of man for their object, whom nature seems to have abandoned to himself; as soon as she has performed the office of ushering him into the world. Exposed to cold, hunger and a numberless train of ills, nature has ordained that the remedies and preservatives necessary for them should be the price of his own work and industry. This gave rise to the mechanic arts.

The next kind have pleasure for their object; these sprung wholly from the bosom of joy, and owe their existence to sentiments produced from ease and affluence; and are by way of excellency stiled polite arts, such are music, poetry, painting, sculpture, and the art of gesture or dancing.

The third kind are those which have usefulness and pleasure at the same time for their object; such are eloquence and architecture. Necessity first produced them, and taste has given them the stamp of perfection.---They hold a kind of middle rank between the other two kinds, and share their usefulness and pleasure.

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The arts of the first kind employ nature, as they find her; solely for use. Those of the third bestow a certain polish upon her, the better to fit her for use and social pleasure. The polite arts do not employ, they only imitate her each in its way. This may perhaps want an explanation, which we shall endeavor to give in the next chapter. Thus nature alone is the object of all the arts. It is she that contains all our wants and all our pleasures, and the design of both the mechanic and liberal arts is to procure these from her.

We shall confine ourselves here to the polite arts, or those whose sole object is to please; and to render ourselves better acquainted with them, it will be necessary to recur to the cause which first produced them.

Mankind invented the arts, and invented them for themselves. Unsatisfied with too scanty an enjoyment of those objects which simple nature offered, and finding themselves more-over in a situation capable of receiving pleasure, they had recourse to their genius to procure themselves a new order of ideas and sentiments, which should awaken their wit and enliven their taste: but what could a genius do whose limited materials and contracted views reached not beyond simple nature? and having on the other hand to labor for men whose faculties were circumscribed within the same narrow bounds? its utmost efforts then were necessarily reduced to making choice of the most striking and beautiful parts of nature, and to

form one exquisite whole which should be more perfect than mere nature, without ceasing however to be natural. This is the principle on which the plan of all arts must necessarily have been built, and which all the great artists followed thro' succeeding times.

From hence we may conclude first, that genius, which is the parent of all arts, ought to imitate nature; secondly, that nature should not be imitated in her ordinary dress, such as she appears to us every day; lastly, that taste for whom arts are made, and who is the judge of them, ought to be satisfied when they have made a happy choice of nature, and properly imitated her. Thus all our rules should tend to establish the imitation of what we call beautiful nature.

## CHAP. II.

Genius could produce arts only by imitation. What is meant by imitation.

THE mind of man is indued with but very imperfect powers for creation: all it's productions necessarily wear the impression of a model. Even the monsters and extravagant figures, that the disordered imagination of those in a delirium present to them, are entirely composed of parts taken from nature; and if the imagination does by a caprice assemble these parts together in a manner contrary to the laws of nature, in thus degrading nature it degrades itself, and is changed into

into a kind of folly. The genius has it's fixed bounds, beyond which if it once passes it bewilders itself and produces a chaos instead of a regular work; and in room of giving us pleasure and satisfaction only disgusts and displeases us.

Genius is not, as is commonly imagined by those who consider it only superficially, a violent fire which hurries away the mind and leads it at hazard; it is not a blind force acting merely mechanically: a spring which just casts forth it's streams and then abandons them; no, it is a rational and active faculty which exercises itself on objects with due art, industriously enquires into their every real and possible appearance, dissects in a just and methodical manner their minutest parts, and compares them in their remotest affinities with each other: in a word, it is an intelligent instrument, which searches out and goes to the very bottom of things: it's function consisting not in supposing what cannot, but in finding out and investigating what actually does exist.

Thus by invention in arts, we are not to understand the giving existence to an object, but only the discovering such object where it is, and as it is. Men of genius have a power of creation only by being nice observers of nature, as they are observers only to attain that power; and on this account they are attentive to the smallest object; giving themselves up to it with the greatest ardor, because the result of their observations generally proves some new advantage



in point of knowledge, which at once enlarges and enriches their understanding: the genius being like the earth, incapable of producing any thing of which it has not first received the seeds. And so far is the artist from being confined or impoverished in his operations by this comparison, that on the contrary it serves to discover to him the true source and extent of his real treasures, which are hereby rendered immense; since every new acquisition that the mind gains in point of knowledge from nature, becoming as it were the germ of some production in the arts, the genius by this means has no other bounds as to its object than those of the universe.

But genius stands in need of some assistance and support itself: this it meets with in nature, whom as it cannot create it should never destroy; it can only then follow and imitate her, and consequently its productions can be no other than effects of imitation.

To imitate is to copy after a model. This term includes two separate ideas. 1. The prototype or pattern, containing the touches to be imitated. 2. The copy which represents them. Nature, that is whatsoever exists or that we easily conceive as possible, is the prototype or model of arts. It is necessary, as we have before observed, that the industrious imitator should always have his eyes fixed on her, and make her the sole object of his attention; for he will there find the plan of every regular production, and the design

fig or first draught of every thing ornamental and capable of pleasing. Arts do not create their own rules; these are independant of their caprice and invariably traced in the grand sample of nature.

What is then the real function of the arts? it is to transport those touches which are in nature, and to present them in objects to which they are not natural. Thus the statuary shews us an hero in a block of marble, the painter by his coloring makes every visible object seem to project from the canvas, the tempest roars in the artificial sounds of the musician whilst all around us is calm; and the poet too, by the force of his invention and the harmony of his verse, fills our minds with counterfeit images, and our hearts with imaginary sentiments oft-times infinitely more charming than if they were true and natural. Whence I conclude, that arts, in what is properly the subject of art, are only imitations, resemblances, which are not really nature, but only appear so to be: and that thus the matter of the polite arts is not truth, but probability: this consequence is important enough to require an immediate explanation, which we shall do by way of application.

What is painting? an imitation of visible objects. This art has nothing of reality or truth in it; all here is phantom and delusion, and the height of it's perfection depends only on it's resemblance with reality.

Music and dancing may very well regulate the tone of voice, and action of the orator in his declamation, or the citizen in his simple tale, but cannot, taken in this light, be properly called arts. They may also wander, the one into whimsical strains, where the notes clash together without regularity or design, the other into leaps and vaultings, as fancy or caprice directs; but neither one nor the other are then within their just bounds. To be what they ought to be, they must return to imitation, and become the artificial portrait of the human passions; then we acknowledge their power with pleasure, and they inspire us with that proper degree and kind of sensation which can alone be satisfactory.

To conclude, poetry exists but by fiction. Here the wolf bears the characters of the powerful and unjust man; the lamb those of innocence oppressed. Pastoral offers us poetical shepherds, which are mere resemblances and images. Comedy draws the picture of an ideal miser, under the borrowed resemblance of real avarice. Tragedy is not properly poetry, but in that which it feigns by imitation. As for instance, Cæsar and Pompey have had a dispute; this is not poetry, but history; but if actions, discourses and intrigues are invented, agreeable to the ideas which history gives us of the characters and fortunes of Cæsar and Pompey, this is what may be called poetry, because these circumstances are entirely the work of genius and art.

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The epic too is only a recital of probable actions represented with all the characters of reality. Juno and Æneas never spoke or acted as they do in Virgil, but they might have thus acted or thus spoke; this alone is enough for poetry, which is one perpetual fiction arrayed in all the characters of truth.

Thus every art, in those respects wherein it is truly artificial, is only an imaginary thing, a fictitious being copied and imitated from true ones. For this reason art is always put in opposition to nature, and hence arises the universal cry that we must imitate nature; that the perfection of art consists in a proper representation of her; and that the performances of art, esteemed most excellent in their kind, are those wherein the imitation of nature is so lively, as to be almost taken for nature herself.

And this imitation for which we all have so natural a disposition, for it is by example that mankind are governed and taught; *vivimus ad exempla*: this imitation, I say, is one of the principal springs of that pleasure we receive from the arts. The mind amuses itself with comparing the model with the picture, and the judgment it forms thereon is so much the more agreeable, as it is a proof of it's own knowledge and penetration.

This is not the doctrine of to day; it is to be found every where among the antients. Aristotle begins his art of poetry by this position, that music,



fic, dancing, poetry and painting are imitative arts; and to this all his subsequent rules refer. According to Plato, it is not sufficient to constitute a poet that he gives us a relation; he must invent and create what he relates. And in his republick he condemns poetry, because as being in it's own nature an imitation, the objects imitated by it may have an effect on the manners. Horace adopts the same principle in his art of poetry.

*Si fautoris eges aulea manentis ———  
Ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores,  
Mobilibusque decor naturis dandus & annis.* Hor.

If you would keep us 'till the curtain fall,  
And the last chorus for a plaudit call;  
The manners must your strictest care engage,  
The levities of youth, and strength of age.

FRANCIS.

But why are we to observe and study the manners, if not with a design to copy them?

*Respicere exemplar vitæ morumque jubebo  
Doctum imitatore, & vivas hinc ducere voces.*

Keep nature's great original in view,  
And thence the living images pursue. Id.

*Vivas voces ducere*, is what we call painting after nature. And is not the whole expressed in this short sentence?

..... *Ex noto fictum carmen sequar.*

From well known tales a fiction I will raise. Id.  
And

And here one may be readily deceived, thinking that we behold nature herself, and that nothing could be more easy than to paint her in this manner; but such a work would be a fiction, a work of genius, far above the powers of a common understanding which here,

..... Sudet multum frustra; laboret.

In vain would labour, and in vain would toil.

FRANCIS.

The very terms made use of by the antients in speaking of poetry are proofs of their regarding it as a work of imitation. The Greeks say, ποιῆν and μιμεῖσθαι. The first of which the Latins rendered by *facere*, and their best authors say, *facere poema*; that is, to form, fabricate, create: and the second term they express sometimes by *ingere*, at others by *imitari*; terms which may with equal propriety be taken for an artificial imitation such as that of arts, as in a real and moral sense with regard to society. But as the signification of these words have in process of time been enlarged, wrested, or confined, it has given room to mistakes, and thrown an obscurity upon principles otherwise sufficiently clear in themselves and in the authors by whom they were first established. The term fiction has been chiefly applied to fable, which makes the gods interfere or act in the conduct of some enterprize; because this part of fiction was  
esteem-

esteemed the most noble. By imitation has been understood not only that artificial copying of nature, which consists in representing or counterfeiting her, *ὑποκρίναι*; but has been extended to all imitation in general; so that these terms having no longer the same signification as formerly, have ceased to be proper for characterizing poetry, and the language of the antients has by this means been rendered unintelligible to the reader.

From the whole of what has been said, it follows that poetry subsists only by imitation. The same may be said with respect to painting, music and dancing, in whose performances there is nothing real but every thing is the effect of imagination, fiction, imitation and art: and this constitutes the essential character of each in contradistinction to nature.

### CHAP. III.

Genius is not to imitate simple nature.

**G**enius and taste have so intimate a connection in arts, that there are cases where they cannot be united, without seeming to confound one another, nor separated without almost divesting them of their functions. This is the case here, where it is impossible to say what the genius ought to do in imitating nature, without supposing taste to be it's guide. We are therefore obliged to consider the matter a little in this place, to pre-

prepare the reader for what follows; but we shall reserve a more particular discussion of it for the second section.

Aristotle compares poetry with history. Their difference, according to him, is not in the form or stile, but in the nature of the thing itself; Let us examine in what manner.

History represents what has happened; poetry what might have happened. The former is strictly confined to truth, creating neither action nor actors; the latter regards nothing but the probable. It invents, it designs at pleasure, and paints only from the brain.---The historian brings examples such as they are; often imperfect. The poet gives them such as they ought to be; and for this reason, according to the same philosopher, poetry is a much more instructive lesson than history. Upon this principle we must conclude that if arts are imitations of nature, they should be bright and lively imitations; not servilely copying her, but selecting the objects and their strokes in a proper manner, and representing them with all the perfections they are capable of. In a word, imitations where nature is seen not such as she really is, but such as she may be, and such as may be conceived in the mind.

What did Zeuxis do when he would paint a perfect beauty? did he draw the picture of any particular fine woman? no: he gathered together the separate features of several beauties who were  
then



then alive (*a*). Then he formed in his mind an idea that resulted from all these features united: and this idea was the prototype, or model of his picture, which was probable and poetical in the whole, and was true and historical only in the parts taken separately. And this is what every painter does, when he represents the person he paints with more beauty and grace than they really have. This is an example given to all artists: this is the road they ought to go, and 'tis the practice of every great master, without exception.

When Moliere wanted to paint a man-hater, he did not look out for an original, of which his character should be an exact copy: he had then made but a picture; a history: he had then instructed but by halves. But he collected every mark, every stroke of a gloomy temper that he could observe amongst men. To this he added all that the strength of his own genius could furnish him with of the same kind; and from all these hints, well connected, and properly disposed, he drew a single character, which was not the representation of the true, but of the probable. His co-

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(*a*) Præbete quæso, inquit, ex istis virginibus formosissimas, dum pingo id quod pollicitus sum vobis, ut mutum in simulachrum ex animali exemplo veritas transferatur. — Ille autem quinque delegit. — Neque enim putavit omnia quæ quæreretur ad venustatem, uno in corpore se reperire posse; ideo quod nihil simplici in genere omnibus ex partibus perfectum natura expolivit. Cic. l. 2. de Inv.

medy was not the history of Alcestes, but his picture of Alcestes was the history of misanthropy taken in general. And by this means he has given much better instruction, than a scrupulous historian could possibly have done, by only relating some strictly true strokes of a real man-hater.

It was a saying among the antients, he is as beautiful as a statue. And it is in the same sense that Juvenal, to express all the possible horrors of a tempest, calls it a poetical tempest.

..... Omnia fiunt  
Talia tam graviter, si quando Poëtica surgit  
Tempestas. Sat. 12.

As when the Poet bids the storm arise.

These examples are sufficient to give a clear and distinct idea of what we call beautiful nature. It is not the truth that does exist, but that truth which may exist: beautiful truth which is represented as if it really existed, and with all the perfections it can receive.

The quality of the object makes no difference. Let it be an hydra, or a miser, an hypocrite, or a Nero, if they are well drawn, and represented with all the fine touches that belong to them, we still say that beautiful nature is there painted. It matters not whether it be the furies or the graces.

This does not hinder however that truth and reality may be made use of by the polite arts. The muses themselves tell us in Hesiod,

Ἰδμεν ψευδεὶς πολλὰ λεγέειν ἐτυμοῖσιν ὁμοία,  
Ἰδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἰδελώμεν ἀληθεῖα μυθῶσσαι.

Tho' oft our dext'rous pencil by it's art,  
To falshood can the drefs of truth impart;  
Yet the same skill can to men's wond'ring eyes,  
Bid radiant truth pure and unmix'd arise.

If an historical fact was found so well work'd up, as to be fit to serve for a plan to a poem, or a piece of painting; poetry and painting too would immediately employ it as such, and would on the other hand make use of their privileges, in inventing circumstances, contrasts, situations, &c. When Le Brun painted the battles of Alexander, he found in history the facts, the actors and the scene of action; but notwithstanding this, what a noble invention, what a glow of poetry appear in his work! the dispositions, attitudes, expressions of passions, all these remained for his own genius to create. There art built upon the basis of truth, and this truth ought to be so elegantly mixed with the feigned, as to form one whole of the same nature.

Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,

Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum. Hor.

And truth and fiction with such skill be join'd,

That nor beginning, midst, nor end we find.

This we find practis'd every day in epic and tragic pieces, and in history paintings: as the  
fact

fact is then no longer in the hands of the historian, but entirely given up to the power of the artist who has the licence to put every thing in practice to arrive at his end; he accordingly works it up a-fresh, and gives it a new form; he adds, retrenches, or transposes the several parts as he sees most convenient to his purpose. If it is a poem, he lays the plot, prepares the unravelling, &c. for it is to be supposed that the whole of this primarily existed in the history, and only wanted to be brought to light, or if not, art will in that case exert all its rights in their utmost extent, and create whatever circumstances it may stand in need of in the course of it's undertaking; a privilege it is entitled to, from the known obligation it is under of pleasing and satisfying us in it's performance.

#### CHAP. IV.

In what situation a genius ought to be to imitate nature.

**T**HE most fruitful geniusses do not always feel the presence of the muses; they have their times of dearth and sterility. Shakespear, who was born a poet often flags, and we know that the muse of Milton had her repose of several months; to which are owing the inequalities so easy to be traced in his works; and not to mention Statius, Claudian, and many others, who have experienced the returns of languor and feebleness; does



does not the great Homer sometimes nod even in the midst of his gods and heroes? the genius then has undoubtedly it's happy moments, when the soul as if filled with a divine fire, takes in all nature, and diffuses on every object that lively spirit which animates them, and those striking beauties which at once transport and ravish us.

This situation of the soul is called enthusiasm; a term known to most, defined by hardly one. The ideas which most authors give of it, seem rather the sallies of an overheated imagination struck by enthusiasm itself, than the decision of a mature judgment or sound reflection on the subject. At one time you find it represented as a celestial vision, a divine influence, a prophetic spirit, at another it is an intoxication, an extasy, a pleasing sensation mixed with trouble and admiration in the presence of the deity. One might naturally ask these gentlemen, if they intended by this florid and emphatic language to elevate the arts, and hide from the profane the sacred mysteries of the muses?

For us who seek to enlighten our ideas let us despise this allegoric pomp, which only serves to blind and confound us. Let us consider enthusiasm as a philosopher considers the great; unaffected with that pageantry and parade which while it surrounds obscures them.

The spirit which inspires all good authors when they compose, is like the deity that animates the hero in his battles.

23  
OF LITERATURE.

*Sua cuique Deus fit dira cupido.*

Each man's ruling passion is his God.

In the one it is a noble presence of mind, a natural intrepidity even roused by the presence of danger itself, in the other a vast fund of genius, a just and exquisite wit, a fruitful imagination, and above all, a heart filled with a noble fire, which lights up and breaks forth at the first view of suitable objects. Spirits of this choice, this enlightened kind, take the strongest impressions of things they once conceive, and never fail to reproduce them, adorned with new beauty, force and elegance.

This is the true source and principle of enthusiasm. We may already perceive what must naturally be its effects, with regard to the arts, which are imitators of nature.

Let us recollect the example of Zeuxis. The treasury of nature supplies us with all those images of which the most beautiful imitations can be composed; they are like sketches in the painter's tablet. The observant artist immediately distinguishes them, takes them from the heap and assembles them. From these he composes a complete whole, of which he conceives an idea that fills him, an idea at the same time both bright and lively; presently his soul takes fire at the sight of the object. He is now transported, he forgets himself, and his soul passes into the things he creates. He is by turns Cæsar, Brutus, Macbeth and Romeo.

## THE PRINCIPLES

If it is the fabulist, he is the wolf or the lamb, the oak or the bullrush. It is in one of these poetic transports that Homer sees the chariots and couriers of the Gods, that Virgil hears the dismal screams of Phlegias in the infernal shades, and that each of them discovers things which have no where existence, and notwithstanding are true.

..... Poëta cum tabulas cepit sibi

Quærit quod nusquam est gentium, repperit ramen.

The same enthusiasm is necessary to produce the same effects in the painter and the musician. They should totally forget their own situation, make an excursion from themselves, and be placed in the midst of the things they would represent. Would they paint a battle? they should transport themselves in the same manner as the poet, into the thickest of the tumult; they hear the clash of arms, the groans of the dying; they see rage, havoc and blood; they spur up and excite their own imaginations till they find themselves moved, surprized and affrighted, then *Deus, ecce Deus!* let them write or paint, it is a God that inspires them; we see,

..... Bella, horrida, bella,

Et Tiberim multo spumantem sanguine cerno.

..... Wars, horrid wars,

And Tiber foaming with the blood of slain.

This is what Cicero calls "*Mentis viribus excitari, divino spiritu afflari.*" This is true poetic rage! this is real enthusiasm! this is the God that

that the poet invokes in the epic, that inspires the hero in tragedy; the deity that transforms himself into the simple cit in comedy, the shepherd in pastoral, and that bestows reason and speech on animals in the apologue or fable: in a word, the deity that makes true painters, musicians and poets.

It may perhaps appear somewhat extraordinary to hear it said, that the spirit of enthusiasm, which we have been always taught to look upon as necessary only in the greater and more noble productions of lyric and epic poetry, should be required even in a fable. But what is this enthusiasm? It contains only two things, a lively representation of the object in the mind, and an emotion of heart proportioned to such object (a).

Now as there are objects which are simple, noble, sublime, &c. so have each of these a certain degree of enthusiasm proper to itself; and it is this correspondent degree which the painter, musician or poet is to adopt, according to the respective kind of objects they are employed upon; and this is the only means to attain their proposed end, viz. the expression of nature in her highest beauty. For this reason, Gay in his fables, and Wycherley in his comedies, are as truly poets,

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(a) On these occasions which require enthusiasm, says Plutarch, the God does not elevate the person whom he inspires, but only gives him lively ideas, which ideas produce correspondent sentiments.



and great ones too, as Shakespear in his tragedies, and Prior in his odes.

# CHAP. V.

In what manner arts imitate.

**H**itherto we have endeavored to shew that the polite arts consisted in imitation, and that the object of their imitation was nature represented to the mind by enthusiasm. We have nothing more to do, than to shew the manner in which this imitation is made. And by this means, we shall have the particular difference of arts, whose common object is the imitation of nature.

Nature may be divided with regard to the polite arts into two parts: one of which we take in by the eyes, and the other by the ministry of the ears: for the other senses are quite barren, with regard to the polite arts. The first part is the object of painting, which represents upon a plane all that is visible. It is the object also of sculpture, that represents nature in relievo; it is the object likewise of the art of gesture, which is a branch of the other two arts which I just now named, and which differs in what it includes only in this, that the subject to which gestures are given in dancing is natural and alive, whilst the painter's canvas and the marble of the statuary are not so.

The second part is the object of musick, considered singly and as a simple tune, bearing the  
second

second place to poetry, which employs words, but words in metre, and regulated in all its tones.

Thus painting imitates nature by colors, sculpture by relievos, dancing by the motions and attitudes of the body. Musick imitates it by inarticulate sounds, and poetry by words in measure. These are the distinctive characters of the principal arts. And if it sometimes happens, that those arts mix with one another and are confounded, as for example, in poetry, if dancing furnishes gestures to the actors upon the stage; if musick gives the tone of voice in declamation; if the pencil decorates the scene; these are services which they render mutually to one another, in virtue of their common end, and their reciprocal alliance, but it is without any prejudice to their particular and natural rights. A tragedy without gestures, without musick, without decoration, is still a poem. It is an imitation expressed by discourse in metre. A piece of musick without words is still musick. It expresses complaint or joy independantly of words, which help it indeed; but neither give or take away any thing that alters its nature. Its essential expression is sound, as that of painting is color, and of dancing the movement of the body.

But there is here a remark to be made, that as arts ought to chuse their designs from nature, and perfect them, they ought also to chuse and perfect the expressions they borrow from nature. They should not employ all sorts of colors, nor

all sorts of sounds: they must make a just choice, and an exquisite mixture of them: they must be connected, proportioned, shaded and put in an harmonious order. Colors and sounds have sympathies and antipathies among themselves. Nature has a right to unite them according to her will, but it is art that should do it according to rules. It is not sufficient that it hurts not the taste, but it should flatter it, and flatter it as much as it is capable of being flattered.

This remark may be applied equally to poetry. Words, which are its instruments or colors, have in poetry a certain degree of beauty, which they have not in common language: they are the marble chosen, polished and cut, which make the edifice more rich, beautiful and substantial. There is a certain choice of words, turns, and above all a certain regular harmony, which gives its language something supernatural, that charms and lifts us above ourselves (*a*).

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(*a*) The two great perfections in the works of genius, says Mr. Addison, are wit and sublimity; many writers have been witty, several have been sublime, and some few have even possessed both these qualities separately; but they have seldom been incorporated. This seems to be the last effort of the imagination to poetical perfection, and in this compounded excellence the wit receives a dignity from the sublime, and the sublime a splendor from the wit, which in their state of separate existence they both wanted.

## CHAP. VI.

## Definitions of the arts.

**I**T will now be very easy to give a definition of those arts which have hitherto been the subject of our consideration. We are already acquainted with their object, their end, their functions, and the methods by which they acquire themselves therein : we have seen what they have in common with each other, by which they are connected ; lastly, the particular and distinct properties of each, by which they are separated and distinguished from one another.

We shall therefore define painting, sculpture and dancing, an imitation of beautiful nature expressed by colors, relief and attitudes ; and music and poetry are imitators of beautiful nature expressed by sounds, or a measured discourse. We shall in the second section explain in what beautiful nature consists.

These definitions are simple and agreeable to the nature of the genius, by which as we have already seen first produced arts. Nor are they not less so to the laws of taste, as shall be presently shewn ; and to conclude, they may be adapted to every species of production, which is really the work of art.---And this will appear by application.



## C H A P. VII.

How eloquence and architecture differ from the other arts.

**W**E must recall for one moment the division which we made of arts in the second chapter. There were some invented for want alone, others for pleasure, and some owed their birth first to necessity; but having since found out the way to adorn themselves with beauties, they began to be reckoned in the number of those which we call polite arts. It is thus that architecture, having changed those caves which necessity had dug out for the retreat of mankind, into elegant and commodious dwellings, deserved a distinction among the arts which it had not before.

The same thing happened to eloquence. The necessity which men had to communicate their thoughts and sentiments to one another, made them orators and historians, as soon as they could make use of words. Experience, time and taste added new degrees of perfection to their discourse. They formed an art which is called eloquence, and which for delight puts itself almost upon a level with poetry: its relation and resemblance with poetry gave it an occasion to borrow and deck itself with those ornaments which might suit it. From thence came the round periods, the measured antithesis, the striking description, and the well sustained allegory. From thence the choice of words, the arrangement of phrases, the uni-

uniform progression of harmony. It was then, that art served for a model to nature; which sometimes indeed happens, but always upon this condition, which ought to be the base and fundamental rule of all arts, viz. That in those arts which are for use, pleasure takes the character of necessity itself, every thing in them ought to look as if they were for use. In the same manner, as in those arts which are destined for delight, use has no right to enter, except where it has the character to procure the same pleasure, as if it was calculated solely to please.

Thus poetry and sculpture having taken their subjects from history or from society would have but a weak excuse for a bad performance, by urging the justness of their copy from the model they had taken; because it is not the true, but the beautiful that we expect from them: in the same manner eloquence and architecture would deserve the greatest reproach, if the design of pleasing appeared strongly in them. 'Tis in these that art blushes if it is discovered. Every thing that is only ornamental is vicious, since it is use and not pleasure we require of them.

There are occasions however where eloquence and architecture may soar a little. Heroes are to be celebrated, and temples to be built. And as it is the duty of these two arts to imitate the grandeur of the object, and to excite the admiration of men, they are permitted to rise some degrees, and to expose all their riches: but still

without wandering from their original end, which is use. We expect beauty upon these occasions, but a beauty at the same time that is of a real usefulness.

What would be thought of a sumptuous edifice which could be of no use? the expence compared with the uselessness, would occasion a disagreeable disproportion to those who saw it, and the utmost ridicule to him who built it. If the edifice requires grandeur, majesty and elegance, it is always in consideration of the master who is to inhabit it. If there is proportion, variety, unity in it, 'tis to render it more compact, more solid, more commodious: every beauty, to be perfect, ought to have some use. As, on the contrary, in sculpture things of use ought to become pleasing and delightful.

Eloquence is subjected to the same law. In its greatest liberties, 'tis always confined to usefulness and truth; and if sometimes the likely or the agreeable become its object, it never goes far, and only makes use of these liberties, because truth has never more credit than when it is pleasing.

The orator and historian have nothing to create, their genius serves them only to discover the real appearance of their object: they have nothing to add, nothing to retrench: they scarcely dare to transpose: whilst the poet makes models for himself, without troubling himself with reality.

Insomuch that if we were to define poetry in contradistinction to prose or to eloquence, which

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I here take for the same thing; we should say, that poetry is an imitation of beautiful nature expressed by discourse in measure; and prose or eloquence is nature itself expressed by free discourse. The orator ought to tell the truth in a manner which may make it be believed, with that force and simplicity that persuade. The poet ought to tell the probable in a manner that renders it agreeable, with all the grace and energy that charm and astonish. Nevertheless as pleasure prepares the heart to persuasion, and as profit flatters mankind, who are not apt to forget their own interest; it follows, that the agreeable and useful ought to unite in poetry and in prose: but in placing themselves in an order conformable to the object they propose to themselves, in these two manners of writing. This we shall explain more fully in the third part of our work, which treats of oratory and eloquence.

There are poetical fictions that appear in the simple habit of prose. Such are romances, and all works of that kind.

We also see subjects that have truth for their objects, drest and adorned with all the charms of poetic harmony: such are the didactick or instructive kinds of poetry. But these instances of poetry and prose are pure in neither kind: they are a mixture of both, to which our definitions have no regard, they are caprices made on purpose to be out of rule.



“ We know of sacrifices, says Plutarch, (*de audiendis poetis*) without either chorusses or symphonies; but, as to poetry, we know of no species of it without fable or fiction.” The verses of Empedocles, Parmenides and Nicander, and the sentences of Theognides are none of them of the poetic kind. They are only common discourses which have borrowed the poetic rhapsody and measure to raise their own stile, and insinuate themselves with greater ease into the reader’s mind.

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## S E C T. II.

Wherein the principle of imitation is established by nature and the laws of taste.

**I**F every thing in nature is uniform and connected on account of the exact order every where observed by her, so likewise should it be in the arts as imitators of nature; there should be one fixed point of union to which, as to a common centre, their most distant or scattered parts should tend; so that by knowing one single part, we might be able to form some kind of judgment of the rest.

Genius and taste have the same object in arts, the one creates it, the other judges of it. So that if it is true that genius produces works of art by imitating nature, as has been already proved, the taste, as judge of the productions of genius, can  
only

only be where nature has been well imitated. Tho' this conclusion is in itself sufficiently just and true, yet it may be necessary to explain it a little more fully, which we shall do in this section, by shewing what taste is, what laws it has a right to prescribe to arts, and that these laws are all confined to imitation, such as it has already been characterized in the foregoing section.

## ARTICLE I.

What taste is.

**T**HERE is a good taste. This is a proposition, not problematical, those who doubt it are not born to comprehend the proofs they require. But what is this good taste? is it possible that with such an infinite number of rules in arts, and of examples in the works of both antients and moderns, we should yet be at a loss to form a clear and distinct idea of it? or may not the very multiplicity of these examples, and the too great number of rules, rather cloud than enlighten our conception, and by their vast variety, arising from the differences of the subjects treated of, hinder it from fixing on one determinate point, from which it might draw a just definition?

There is but one sole and absolutely good taste. But in what does it consist? on what does it depend? on the object itself, or on the genius that works on that object? has this truly good taste its rules, or has it not; is the mind alone its organ, or the heart, or both together? what

questions are here, on a term so well known, so often treated of, but which has never yet been clearly explained.

One would be tempted to imagine, that the antients were never at any pains to search after it, and that the moderns on the contrary, if they do sometimes attain to it, owe their success wholly to chance. They labor on with difficulty in a road which seems too narrow and confined for them; hence they seldom avoid falling into one or other of the two extremes; we see the appearance of affectation in those who write with care and circumspection, and of negligence and inattention in those who endeavor to write with ease and freedom; whereas such of the antients as have reached us, seem to be led by an happy genius, and proceed void of all care or concern, as if indeed they could not go otherways. And what is the reason of this difference between them and us? is it not that the antients acknowledged no other model than nature herself, no other guide than their taste? while the moderns proposing the works of these first imitators of nature for their models, and fearful of breaking in upon the rules established by art; see their copies by this means degenerate, and carry an air of constraint, which at once betrays the art they make use of, and throws all the advantage on the side of nature.

Taste alone then can furnish masterly productions, and bestow that air of freedom and ease on

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the works of art which constitutes their most shining merit.

We have already sufficiently considered nature, and the examples with which she furnishes genius. It now remains to examine taste and it's laws. Previous however to entering on this subject, let us endeavor to make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with this sentiment, let us find out if possible it's principle, and then we may at leisure consider the rules it prescribes to the polite arts.

Taste then, is in the arts, what knowledge is in the sciences. They have a different object indeed, but their respective functions are so analogous, that the one may serve to explain the other.

Truth is the object of the sciences, the just and agreeable of the arts; terms which considered nearly signify almost one and the same thing.

Knowledge considers objects as they are in themselves, according to their essence, and without any regard to us; taste on the other hand employs itself on those objects solely with regard to us.

There are some persons who have a false knowledge, because they imagine they perceive truth where it does not really exist; while those of a false taste think they are sensible of the good or bad, where in effect they are not to be found.

That knowledge is sound and perfect which sees without confusion, and distinguishes without error between truth and fiction, probability and demon-



demonstration; and that is a good taste, which, by a clear distinct impression, perceives the good and bad, the excellent and the indifferent, without once confounding them or taking the one for the other.

So that I may define knowledge an aptitude of discerning truth and fiction, and of distinguishing them from each other; and taste, a like aptitude of perceiving the good, the bad and the indifferent, and distinguishing them with perspicuity and certitude.

Thus the terms true and good, knowledge and taste, furnish us at once with all our objects, and all our operations. These in a word are the arts and sciences.

I shall leave to the profound researches of the metaphysicians to unfold the secret springs of the human mind, and to dive into the principles of it's operations; I have no occasion in this place to enter upon such speculative discussions, wherein one is oftener obscure than sublime; I set out upon a principle which no one will contest with me, viz.

The mind conceives, and this conception produces in it a sentiment. Conception is a certain light diffused over the mind. A sentiment is a certain motion actuating the mind. The one enlightens, the other warms it. The one points out the object, the other either inclines us towards it, or diverts us from it.

Taste

Taste then, is a sentiment, and as, in the subject we are at present upon, this sentiment has for it's object the works of art, and that these arts have already been proved to be only imitations of elegant nature; it follows, that taste is a sentiment which teaches us when elegant nature has been well or ill imitated. This will explain itself up as we proceed.

Altho' this sentiment may appear to proceed from a sudden or blind sally of the imagination, yet it is always preceded by some glimmering or spark of light, by favor of which we are able to discover the qualities of the object. The chord must be struck before it will render a sound, but indeed this operation is so rapid, that oft-times it escapes our notice. And when reason comes to examine the sentiment, she is often at a loss to account for it's cause. Hence probably arises the difficulty in determining the superiority of the antients over the moderns.---Taste alone being the proper judge in this cause, at whose tribunal we often feel more than we can prove.

## CH A P. II.

Taste can have no other object than nature. Argumentative proofs.

**T**HE mind is formed to conceive the truth, and to love what is good, and from the natural proportion subsisting between it and these objects, it cannot but yield to such impressions as they are disposed to make on it; as it has received

ed such impression it rouses itself, and is all in motion; a proposition in geometry, once well conceived, naturally enforces our assent; and so in what concerns taste, we are guided as it were imperceptibly by our heart, and we find that nothing is so easy as to love what is formed to be loved.

A disposition in itself so remarkable, and strong clearly proves that we are not guided by fancy or chance in our conceptions and taste. The whole is governed by immutable laws, every faculty of the mind has one determinate end, to which it must naturally tend to preserve it's proper order.

That taste which has arts for it's objects, is not a forced taste, it is a part of ourselves, it is born with us, and it's office is to determine us towards what is good. Knowledge precedes it like a torch to light it on it's way. But as it would be to little purpose to know without enjoying the fruits of our knowledge; so has nature shewn herself too wise to separate these two parts, and in bestowing on us the faculty of knowing, she would not deny us that of feeling the relation the object of our knowledge has with our interest, and of being drawn towards it by this sentiment which is called natural taste, because it is the gift of nature to us. But wherefore has nature bestowed this on us? was it to judge of the arts, which are not the children of her creation? no surely, it was to enable us to judge of  
natural

natural things, as they stood in relation to our wants or pleasures.

The polite arts being formed by the industry of man upon the model of nature, and having for their object delight and pleasure, which are in life a second order of wants; the resemblance these arts have with nature, and the conformity of their views, seemed to require that the natural taste should likewise be the judge of arts, which accordingly proved so, and it's office was acknowledged without the least dispute. The arts became a set of new subjects to it (if I may be allowed the expression) who ranging themselves peaceably under it's jurisdiction, gave it no trouble to make the least alteration in it's laws and rules on their account. The taste remained still the same in nature and arts, and promises these latter it's approbation only, on condition that the impressions it receives from them should be equally strong with those it has from nature; nor did the most masterly productions of art ever obtain it on other conditions.

Moreover, as the imagination has the power of creating new beings after it's own manner, and that these beings may be much more perfect than those of simple nature, it happened that taste has, with a kind of predilection, fixed itself on the arts, where it may reign with greater power and splendor. By raising and improving these it has raised and perfected itself, and without ceasing to be natural, appears with a greater lustre, delicacy  
and



and perfection in the arts than it did in nature alone.

But this refinement of taste has in no wise made any alteration in it's essence. It is still the same it ever was, unalterable by any caprice. The good is particularly it's object, and whether this be presented to it by art or nature, 'tis equally the same, provided it enjoys it, that is it's business. If at any time it should mistake the false good for the real, it is either ignorance or prejudice that misleads it, and it was the business of reason to have dispersed these impediments, and have cleared it's way.

Were we sufficiently attentive to the first sparks of this natural taste in our minds, and did in consequence thereof apply ourselves to improve, enlighten and assist it by a judicious train of observations, comparisons, reflections, &c. then should we have an invariable and never-failing rule to judge of the arts. But as we are apt to consider this point with our minds prejudiced, we cannot distinguish nature amidst the confusion of objects that arise, and so often mistake false taste for true, give it the same titles, and suffer it to exercise undisturbed all the functions of the latter. Nevertheless nature is so prevalent, that if by chance some one of a more clear way of thinking takes on him to step forth and oppose this error, natural taste is by this means often reinstated in it's rights.

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This we see happen every day. Even the giddy multitude are won upon, by the voice of a few, and reform their prejudices. Is this now the voice of man, or is it not rather that of nature, which works such surprizing changes? mankind in general are all united by the heart. Those who have represented them in this light, have in such a resemblance given their own, and never failed of meeting applause, since every one thought he saw himself in the representation. Let a person of finished taste be attentive to the impression he receives from any production of art; let him form a clear and lively conception of it; in consequence of this let him give his opinion touching it; it is next to an impossibility but every one else should subscribe to his judgment, since they would feel the same sentiments as himself; and tho' perhaps, in not quite so high a degree, yet still would they be of the same nature: and however strongly they might have been biaſſed by false taste or prejudice, yet would they willingly yield to the impulse of nature, and pay her a secret homage as soon as she manifested herself to them.

## ARTICLE II.

Proofs deduced from the history of taste itself.

**A**TASTE for arts has had it's beginning, progress, and revolutions in the world: what it is, and on what it depends, we shall be able

able to gather from a thorough review of it's history.

There was a time when men solely busied in the care of supporting and defending themselves, were only husbandmen or soldiers, without laws, peace, or manners; societies were then kinds of conspiracies. This was not a period for the polite arts to flourish in, what we know of their nature sufficiently tells us they are the children of peace and plenty.

But when grown weary of committing continual depredations on each other, and convinced by fatal experience that justice and virtue alone could render them truly happy, mankind began to enjoy the protection of laws, the first emotion of the heart was joy, and they gave themselves up without restraint to the pleasures that accompany innocence; the song and the dance were the first means they used to express these sentiments; in process of time, leisure, necessity, opportunity and chance furnished the ideas of the other arts, and opened the way for them.

Great nature spoke, observant man obey'd,  
Cities were built, societies were made.      P O P E.

As soon as men became a little polished by society, and that they began to be sensible of the superiority the gifts of the mind have over those of the body; it is probable that some extraordinary person, inspired with a more than common genius, cast his eyes on nature. That magnificent order,  
joined

joined to an infinite variety ; that just conformity of means with their end, of parts with the whole, and of causes with effects, which he every where observed in her works, struck him with admiration. He perceived that nature, tho' simple in her ways, disdained a sameness, tho' noble in her ornaments, was without affectation, tho' regular in her plans, and fruitful in her resources, yet without any disorder in her preparations, or confusion of rules. At first perhaps he might perceive these things without being able to form very clear ideas of them, but yet this faint sensation was of itself sufficient to lead him to a certain point, and prepare his mind for the reception of farther lights.

Having thus contemplated nature, he next began to consider himself. He perceived he had an innate taste for the harmony he had observed in the dispositions of nature, and found that he was agreeably affected by it. He began to apprehend that the elegant order, beautiful variety, and exact proportion, which he saw pursued in so conspicuous a manner throughout all her works, not only might be capable of lifting men up to the knowledge of the one supreme intelligent being, but that they might even be considered as so many lessons for their conduct, and be improved to the advantage of society.

Then it was, properly speaking, that arts first rose out of nature. 'Till then their elements had lain confounded and dispersed as in a chaos ; and they were hardly known but by faint surmises,  
or



or instinctive notions. But now their principles began to be cleared up; some essays were made towards a more perfect knowledge of them, which were indeed at first but rough sketches: this however was doing a great deal, it was no easy matter to discover a thing of which no certain idea could be had, however diligent the research might be. Who could have thought, that the mere shade of a body, circumscribed by a single line, would become a picture of Appelles; or that a few inarticulated accents should have given birth to the science of music such as it now is? how immense the progress! how many imperfect trials did our forefathers not make towards this! trials which often rather impeded than farthered their labours? how many fruitless efforts, what vain researches, and what unsuccessful experiments? we now enjoy the fruits of all their toil, and as a mark of our gratitude repay them with our contempt.

The arts in their infancy resembled mankind, sprung from a state of rusticity, they stood in need of the polish of education; they imitated nature it is true, but their imitation was as rude as the nature they had for a model, which was generally of the most common and grossest kind; their whole skill consisted in representing things just as they saw and felt them, without knowing what it was to make a choice. Confusion reigned in their plan, disproportion or a tiresome sameness in the parts, and superfluity, extravagance, or clumsiness

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in the ornaments of their productions, which were rather a jumble of materials than a regular structure. Nevertheless they imitated, tho' imperfectly.

At length the Greeks, endowed with a happy genius, made themselves masters in a clear and perspicuous manner of the most essential and capital strokes in beautiful nature; and were the first who plainly saw that it was not sufficient merely to imitate things, without making a judicious choice of them. Till their time the works of art had been no farther remarkable, than by the enormity of the mass, or the greatness of the undertaking; such were the works of the Titans. But the more enlightened Greeks readily perceived, that it was much more noble to charm the mind, than to astonish and dazzle the eyes. They rightly judged, that unity, variety and proportion should make the basis of all arts, and from this principle, so noble and just in itself, and so conformable to the laws of taste and judgment; with them the canvas was first seen to take the relieve and colors of nature, and ivory and marble grew animated under the chizzele. Next music, poetry, eloquence and architecture began to perform wonders, and as the ideas of perfections common to all arts became fixed in that age, there appeared, at almost one and the same time, the most finished and masterly productions in every kind: productions which have ever since served as models to the most polite nations, and

from this epoch we may date the triumph of the arts.

Rome became the disciple of Athens. Acquainted with all the wonders of Greece, she set herself to imitate them, and in a short time became as much esteemed for her works of taste, as she had been dreaded for the force of her arms. She received the applause of all the world, and this approbation may be esteemed a signal proof that the Greeks, from whom the Romans had copied, must have been excellent models, and that their rules had been drawn from no other source than nature herself.

There followed several revolutions in the universe. Europe was over-run by the Barbarians, and the arts and sciences were included in the common ruin of the times; there remained but a faint glimmering of them, which however did, from time to time, cast forth such sparks as proved that there was only a favorable opportunity wanting for them to shine forth again as bright as ever. This at length came. The arts which had been driven from Constantinople took refuge in Italy, and now the *manes* of Horace, Virgil and Cicero were roused from their long repose; the very sepulchres which had served for a while as asylums to sculpture and painting were set open, and these arts brought forth from their hiding-places. Antiquity quickly appeared with all the charms of novelty, and made herself mistress of every heart. Nature again shone forth in all her attractions,  
and

and was again acknowledged. The antients were now consulted, whose works furnished the artist with rules properly established, principles clearly demonstrated, and useful examples diligently set to view. Antiquity was at that time to us, what nature had originally been to the antients; and the artists of France and Italy who had never ceased working with the greatest assiduity, tho' under all the disadvantages of those dark times, now began to reform their works upon these great models, retrenching what was superfluous, and adding what was deficient, they transposed, designed, and ordered their colours in a proper manner, and then first painted with skill and judgment. Taste was by little and little perfectly restored, and each day produced some new instances of perfection; (for it is very easy to be new without ceasing to be natural.) Emulation and a thirst for public applause, inspired and animated men of genius and talents, who now multiplied apace; whilst works of literature and politeness manifested themselves throughout every part of France and Italy. At present we see taste arrived at the highest degree of perfection these nations are capable of carrying it. Will it be its fate to descend again, and approach to the point from whence it set out?

If so, it must be by other steps. Arts were first formed and made perfect, by approaching as near to nature as possible; they are likely to be corrupted and lost by endeavouring to surpass her.



Their productions having for a time retained one certain degree of relish and perfection, and the taste growing palled with a long continuance of even the best things, recourse has been had to new methods to quicken and enliven it. Nature is now loaded, tricked up and dressed after the humor or caprice of a false delicacy; she is screwed up, rendered mysterious, and made to put on a forced smartness, or what we may in other terms call affectation, which is the very extreme opposed to her original rusticity and barbarism; but an extreme, from which it is much more difficult to recover, than even from barbarism itself. In this manner taste and the polite arts fade and become lost in proportion as they depart from nature.

It was always from those who are called the men of wit, or *beaux esprits*, that such decay first began. They have been more fatal to the arts, than even the Goths themselves, who only finished what had been before began by the Pliny's and Seneca's of the age and their followers and admirers. At present the French nation is deservedly in possession of the highest step of perfection in the arts. It is to be wished, they may likewise be possessed of sufficient preservatives against an approaching decline. The examples of men of wit and ingenuity are striking, and the more contagious and dangerous, as it costs so little pains to follow them.

## C H A P. III.

The laws of taste have no other object than the imitation of beautiful nature.

**F**ROM what has been said in the foregoing chapter, it appears, that taste is, like genius, a natural faculty, whose only proper object is nature herself; or what resembles nature. Let us now view it as transported into the midst of the arts, and see what laws it then prescribes them.

First general law of taste to imitate nature.

Taste is the voice of self-love, formed solely for the enjoyment of pleasure; it is greedy of whatsoever can procure it that agreeable sensation. Now as nothing pleases us more than what brings us nearer to a state of perfection, or that gives us such hopes, consequently taste is never so well satisfied, as when presented with objects of such a degree of perfection, as add somewhat to it's ideas, and seem to promise it impressions of a new stamp and character, capable of freeing the mind from that state of satiety into which the common run of objects whereto it had been accustomed, had thrown it.

Hence do we find such charms in the polite arts. What a sensible difference is there between the emotions arising from the perusal of a common history, wherein we meet with nothing but the ordinary occurrences of life, and those often imperfect ones; and that rapture, that extasy where-

with we are inspired by poetry, when transported by her into the regions of enchantment, we in some measure find realised, the pleasing phantoms our imagination had formed? history makes us languish in a kind of slavery, but in poetry the soul enjoys with complacency a state of freedom and elevation (a).

From this principle it follows, not only that taste requires beautiful nature, but that beautiful nature is according to taste. 1. That which has the nearest relation to our own perfection, advantage and interest. 2. That which is at the same time most perfect in itself. I follow this order, because we must be guided by taste in this matter. *Id generatim pulchrum est quod tum ipsius naturæ, tum nostræ convenit.*

Let us suppose that there were no rules extant, and that some philosophic artist had undertaken to discover and establish them for the first time. The point from which he sets out is, a clear and precise idea of the thing for which he intends to form rules. Let us again suppose that he finds this idea in such a definition of the arts as we have already given, viz. Art is an imitation of beautiful nature. He will next ask himself what is the end

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(a) Res gestæ & eventus qui veræ historiæ subjiciuntur, non sunt ejus amplitudinis in quâ anima humana sibi satisfaciat; præstò est pœsis quæ facta magis heroïca confingat. Cùm historia veræ, obviâ rerum satietatē & similitudinē animæ humanæ fastidiosa sit, reficit eam pœsis, in expectata & varia & vicissitudinum plena canus. Bacon, Organi lib. 4.

of this imitation ? he will easily perceive that it is to please, to excite and move, in a word, that it is pleasure : and by thus knowing from whence he departs, and whither he is bound, he will with the greater ease and certainty shape his course.

He will necessarily be a long time a diligent observer ere he attempts to establish his laws. On one hand he will consider whatever offers in physical or moral nature ; the motions of the body and those of the mind, their several kinds, degrees and variations, according to different ages, conditions and situations. On the other hand he will be attentive to the impressions that objects make on himself. He will remark what gives him pleasure or pain, in a greater or less degree ; how these sensations are produced in his mind, and lastly, by what means such agreeable or disagreeable impressions came to affect him.

In nature he perceives beings, some animated, others not. In the former he observes some endowed with a faculty of reasoning, and others who are void of it. In those which have the use of reason, he perceives certain operations which supposed them possessed of greater capacity and more extended views, and discover more of order and conduct than the actions of the irrational kind.

Within himself he finds that he is more affected with objects, as they approach nearer to his own nature, and that the more distant they are from him, the more indifferent he is about them. He perceives, for instance, that he is more con-



cerned at the fall of a young tree, than with that of a rock. The death of an animal which he had been accustomed to admire for it's gentleness and fidelity, affects him more than to see a tree torn up by the roots; and thus proceeding from gradation to gradation, he will perceive this sympathy encrease, in proportion as the object holds a greater or less degree of proximity to his own condition.

From this first observation on nature, our legislator concludes, that the principal qualification in objects presented us by the arts, is, that they be interesting, that is to say, that they have an intimate relation to ourselves. Self-love is the spring that actuates all the movements of the human heart. Hence, nothing affects us so sensibly, as a representation of the passions and actions of our fellow-creatures, as they are so many mirrors in which we behold our own, under the respective views of difference and conformity.

In the second place the observer will have remarked, that nothing attracts him so forcibly, as what gives exercise and emotion to his mind, and dilates the sphere of his ideas and sentiments. From which he concludes, that it is not enough that art made choice of an object to which it is interesting in itself, but that it should likewise represent that object in all the perfection it is capable of. Forasmuch as that perfection includes those qualities which are most agreeable to the nature of the soul and it's wants.

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Our soul is a compound of strength and weakness. It is desirous of exalting and aggrandizing itself, but chuses to do it with as little trouble as possible; it stands in need of exercise and motion, but then this must not be too violent; now it has all these intentions and desires answered in the perfection of the objects presented to it by art.

At first view it finds a pleasing variety in them, arising from the number and difference of parts presented at one and the same time, with the positions, gradations, and striking contrasts peculiar to each. (Mankind do not want the force of example to convince them of the charms of variety) the impression of these different parts acting all together, or each in particular, excites an emotion in the mind, and multiplies it's ideas and sentiments.

But it is not sufficient to multiply the ideas only, they must likewise be exalted and dilated, for which reason there is a necessity for art to bestow an exquisite degree of force and elegance on each of these different parts, that they may appear with an air of singularity and novelty.

Whatever is common is for the most part indifferent. Whatever is excellent is generally rare and singular; often new. Thus the variety, and excellence of the parts are the two main springs which work upon the mind, and give it that pleasure which always accompanies motion and action. Can there be supposed a more delightful situation than that person's, whose soul experiences at one

and the same time, the most lively impressions of painting, music, poetry and dancing, all united to charm it? alas! why is such a satisfaction so seldom compatible with virtue?

This co-exertion of all the senses and faculties of the soul, so agreeable in it's first impression, would soon become as disagreeable and irksome, were it continued too long. Allowances must be made for our weakness, the multiplicity of parts would tire us, were it not for their being connected with each other by such a regularity of disposition, as causes them all to concenter in one point of union. Nothing is less free than art, when once it has taken the first step. In painting, a Raphael or a Reubens, having once chosen the shades and attitudes for the head, instantly perceive the coloring and folds they are to bestow on the drapery of the rest. The first connoisseur who saw the famous Torso at Rome, immediately knew it to be Hercules spinning. In music, the first note regulates all the rest, and however wantonly we may depart from it, a good ear can easily trace it through all it's breaks and variations. But these are flights of the Pindaric kind (*a*), and would

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(*a*) A flight is when one passes rapidly from one object to another, that appears to have no connection with it. These two objects are united in the mind by certain ideas which may be styled mediatory. But as these ideas are not of any consequence, and are very easily supplied, the poet passes them over without staying to express them; and lays hold of the next object that presents, without any previous preparations; this leaves a kind of void, which is called a flight. See Vol. III.

turn to a degree of phrenzy, should we once lose sight of the point we set out from, and the goal we would arrive at.

Unity and variety produce symmetry and proportion; two qualities, which at the same time they suppose a distinction and difference of parts, suppose them nevertheless connected and related between themselves. Symmetry does, if I may so say, divide an object, placing the simple essential parts in the middle, and those which are more complex on either side, which forms a kind of balance or equilibrium that gives a greater degree of order, freedom and elegance to the object itself. Proportion goes still farther, by entering into the *minutiae* of parts, and comparing them between themselves and with the whole; and introducing under the same point of view, unity, variety; and the agreeable harmony of these two qualities with each other. So far extends the law of taste, with respect to the choice and arrangement of the parts of an object.

From whence arises the following conclusion. That elegant nature, such as she ought to be represented by art, includes all the qualities of the beautiful and the good. She is to entertain the mind by representation of objects, which, perfect in themselves, are capable of rendering our ideas likewise more extensive and perfect. This is the beautiful. She is likewise to indulge and flatter the heart by pointing out in those objects such circumstances as are more particularly interesting



to it in tending either to preserve or improve our being. This is the good, which joined to the beautiful, in one and the same object, gives such objects all the qualities necessary to amuse the mind, and at the same time to improve the heart.

It would be needless, I think, to enter into a more nice discussion of the nature of the beautiful and the good. To demonstrate that beauty consists in the relation of means with their end; that a beautiful or elegant body is that, whose members have such a just configuration, as to execute with ease the motions proper to it. That the gracefulness of these motions consists in the facility and exactness wherewith they are performed, &c. &c. Such sort of questions make no part of my subject. I think it sufficient to have settled the true object of the art, to have shewn that it has been invariably the same in all times, and moreover, that the politest and most learned men have always discovered it by the voice of judgment and taste, which in a matter of this kind outstrips the most subtle metaphysician, and is full as sure. The greatest poets and painters since the birth of arts and sciences, notwithstanding the difference of times, tastes, genius and governments, of climates, manners and languages, are all concerned in one essential point; which is to represent nature, and to make a proper choice of her. They have executed this indeed after different manners, some with strength and energy, others with elegance and softness, others again by  
joining

joining the graceful and the bold. But still they have all kept the same grand point in view, viz. the representation of things perfect in themselves, and at the same time interesting to mankind, to whom they were to be shewn. This perfection has always consisted in having the variety, excellence, proportion and symmetry of their parts, as properly united in the works of art, as they are in the great whole of nature. To have the things represented as interesting as possible, it is necessary they should have a connexion with the very being of mankind, either as augmenting, improving, or preserving it; or else, as tending to lessen, weaken, or endanger it; for these two relations of objects are equally interesting to man; nay, perhaps, the latter may be more so than the former, and for this reason, that tho' the essential basis or ground-work of art, the imitation of nature, may have put on different appearances at different times, or with different people, according to their various methods of education, prejudices, modes and fancies; nevertheless this difference in the manner of imitating, could have only had the accidental, never the original nature of things for an object; and has no more altered nature with respect to art, than they could have altered her in herself.

The second general law of taste. That nature should be well imitated.

**T**HIS law has the same foundation as the former. The design of art in imitating beautiful nature is to charm us, by raising us to a more perfect sphere than that we are in. But if this imitation happens to be imperfect, the pleasure it proposes comes mingled with disgust; and when it would shew us the excellent and the perfect, it fails in its intention, and leaves us to regret the disappointment, like one who, about to taste the pleasures of an agreeable dream, is awakened by an unlucky accident, and robbed of his happiness.

There are two qualities requisite to a perfect imitation, viz. exactness and freedom. The former of these regulates, the latter enlivens the imitation.

We suppose that in consequence of the first law of taste, that the models have been properly chosen, well adjusted, and clearly traced in the mind. The artist once arrived at this point, the exactness of the pencil follows as a mere piece of mechanism. We cannot form a just conception of objects, unless they appear to us, in their natural colors.

*Ce qu'on conçoit bien, s'annonce clairement,  
Et les mots, pour le dire, arrivent aisément.*

*Things well conceiv'd can clearly be explain'd,  
And words t'express them are with ease obtain'd.*

So that what relates to the exactness of the imitation is finished as soon as the ideal painting is once clearly formed. But it is not the same with regard to the freedom which is so much the more difficult to attain, as it seems to be the direct opposite to exactness, and indeed it often happens that the one can excel only at the other's expence. Nature seems to have reserved to herself the power of conciliating these different qualities, as a mark of her superiority. She always appears simple and ingenuous, and proceeds without hesitation or reflection, conscious of her unbounded liberty: whilst the arts, confined to a model, constantly bear about with them the badges of their subjection.

An actor seldom behaves on the stage as he would do in real life. The theatrical monarch finds himself embarrassed between his assumed grandeur and his natural sentiments, and if Crispin in comedy appears more natural and easy, it is because the part he performs approaches nearer to his real condition. But the best rule for a free and easy imitation, is to be as much as possible the person we represent; and to place ourselves in the same circumstances and situation. Then we should see action have another sort of fire, a far different kind of ease and freedom than it has in general. For it is impossible to act in general with grace, except the actor forgets he is before an audience. Till he has arrived at that, his motion,



his air, his every step, and gesture has something in them, which discovers he is under a restraint.

Paulum interesse censes ex animo omnia

Ut fert natura facias an de industria?

To attain this perfection, we find the most celebrated painters suffer their pencil at times to sport upon the canvas; now breaking in upon the symmetry, then affecting a disorder in some of the inferior parts, here omitting an ornament, or there purposely leaving a defect, all which is entirely agreeable to the laws of imitation; for the poet tells us,

A ces petits défauts marqués dans la peinture

L'esprit avec plaisir reconnoît la nature. BOILEAU.

The mind with pleasure owns true nature, where

The artist lets some small defects appear.

Before we dismiss this article relating to the truth of imitation, let us enquire whence it happens that objects which displease us in nature are so agreeable in art.

We have just remarked that art affects certain negligences, in order to appear more natural and real; but still we are not to be deceived by this artifice, so far as to mistake it for nature herself. However natural and lively the picture may be, the frame betrays it. *In omni re procul dubio vincit imitationem veritas.* This observation may serve as a kind of resolution of the problem before us.

It

It is enough that objects are perfect in themselves, for the mind to be pleased with them; for, considering them without any respect to it's own interest, it is sufficiently satisfied, provided it finds them regular, bold, and elegant. It is not so with the heart, which is to be affected by objects, only in proportion to the relation they have with it's own peculiar advantage and benefit; and by this it regulates it's esteem or disregard. Hence it follows that the mind is better satisfied with the productions of art, which offer it the beautiful, than it is in general with those of nature, which are always in some measure imperfect; whereas the heart is less interested by artificial, than natural objects; as it has less advantage to expect from them; but this second consequence may need farther illustration.

Truth, as has been before observed, always prevails over imitation, *vincit imitationem veritas*. Consequently, however exact the imitation may be, art will escape and inform the heart, that the object it sees represented is, at best, but a phantom, a mere apparition, and incapable of furnishing it with any thing real or solid. This is what renders those objects agreeable in arts, which were disagreeable in nature. In nature they made us apprehensive of destruction, and gave us an emotion joined to a view of real danger. But as the mind is pleased with the emotion, and displeased with the real danger, therefore it is necessary to separate these two parts of the same composition;

position; which art effects by discovering itself to us at the instant it presents the object that alarms us; thus it re-assures us, and gives our mind the satisfaction of the emotion, unallayed by the mixture of any thing disagreeable; and if at any time in consequence of some extraordinary effort, art should have made us mistake it for nature; as for instance, if a serpent be so naturally painted, as to excite in us an apprehension of real danger, such terror is presently followed by a pleasing change, in which the soul seems to enjoy it's deliverance, as a real happiness. Thus imitation is always the source of pleasure, rendering the emotions equal, whose excess would otherwise be disagreeable, and making the heart amend, when it has suffered by such excess.

These effects of imitation, which are so much to the advantage of disagreeable objects, do, for the same reason, make entirely against those which are pleasing and agreeable; as the art which appears at the same time with them, weakens their impression by betraying their falsity. Or, if the imitation is so perfect as to appear true, and the mind does for a short space enjoy it as a real good, the change which follows dissipates the charms, and throws the heart back to it's former state, with the additional chagrine of having been disappointed. So that *cæteris paribus*, the heart has much less reason to be pleased with the agreeable objects of art, than with the disagreeable ones; accordingly we see that artists succeed

ceed much easier in the one, than in the other. When once the persons of the drama have arrived at compleat happiness we have done with them; or if we are affected with their joy or griefs in some short scenes, our sympathy arises from seeing them incur or escape some imminent dangers. However, it is certain, that there are some images of art which charm us by their elegance and gracefulness, but they would do this infinitely more, were they realised: whereas, the picture which inspires us with a terror no more than agreeable, would, if real, fill us with the greatest horror.

I am sensible that one part of the advantages which melancholy objects represented by art have, arises from the natural disposition of mankind, who born weak and unhappy, are more readily susceptible of fear and sorrow; but I shall not undertake in this place to shew the reasons artists might have for chusing such sorts of objects; it is sufficient to have proved, that it is by imitation that the arts are in a condition to draw an advantage from a disposition which in nature is disadvantageous.

#### CHAP. IV.

Every production has it's particular rules, and taste finds them only in nature.

**T**ASTE is the knowledge of rules by sentiment. This kind of knowledge is much more nice and certain than that of the mind, and indeed without this, all the lights the imagination can



can furnish will be of very little use to the composer. For instance, you understand your art as a geometrician, you can tell by what laws it is governed; you can trace a plan in general: but here is a spot of ground which has several inequalities, give us now the plan which suits best with this, allowing for times, persons, &c. and here your speculation is quite disconcerted.

I may know that the exordium of a discourse should be clear, modest and affecting; but when I come to apply this rule, how shall I know if my thoughts, expressions and turns came up to it? who will direct me where to begin my image, where to end it, or in what part of my discourse it will be best placed? the examples of great masters you will say; but the subject is new: at least the circumstances are so.

To go still farther, suppose you have finished a work excellent in it's kind, it is approved by the connoisseurs, the mind and heart are both pleased with it. Is this sufficient? will it serve as a model for another work of the same kind? no; for the matter is changed; in your's, perhaps, *Œdipus* dies with grief; in his, the orphan is revenged on the usurper of his throne, is restored to life to the joy of his people. You will only retain the essential points; order and symmetry. But you will stand in need of another kind of disposition, another tone, other particular rules, to be drawn from the very heart of the subject. The genius may discover these and present them to the artist; but

but who will chuse them, who will adapt them? taste, and taste only. 'Tis this, will direct your genius in the invention of the parts, that will dispose, unite and polish them; in a word, will act both as overseer and workman.

Do you start at the first sight of rules so very particular? do you ask where they are to be found? you are poet, painter, musician; you who possess supernatural talents; *ingenium ac mens divini*; you who are capable of interrogating the great masters themselves, would you know where the ideas you would execute are to be found?

*Respicere exemplar morum vitæq; jubebo.*

Keep nature's great original in view.

This is the book in which you ought to be read, and if you are not able of yourself to read it, I shall say to you, "hence! the place is sacred!" But if you are really possessed with a desire of fame, read at least the works of those who have been clearer sighted than yourself. The sense alone will discover to you what eluded the enquiries of the mind. Read the antients, and endeavour to imitate them, if you cannot imitate nature.

What! for ever imitating, say you, always a slave? create then! do as Homer, Milton, and Shakespear, and Corneille have done before; mount the sacred tripod, and deliver forth your oracles. But lo! the god is deaf, he hears not your invocation! content yourself then in being with us an admirer of those you cannot equal;  
and

and remember that a few suffice to form models for the rest of mankind.

We are now sufficiently acquainted with the nature and laws of taste; they are as we have before seen, entirely conformable to the nature and office of the genius. It only remains, to make a particular application thereof to the different kinds of arts. But here let us stop a while, and deduce some inferences from what has been already said concerning taste, as I cannot think they will be foreign to the subject.

### FIRST INFERENCE.

There is but one general good taste, but there may be several particular ones.

**T**HE first part of this inference has been already proved by the whole of what we have been saying. Nature is the only object of taste, therefore there can be but one good taste, which is that of nature. Art itself is no otherwise perfect than as it represents nature. Then the taste which appears in art must be still that of nature. So there can be but one only good taste in general, and that consists in being pleased with beautiful nature; therefore those who are not pleased with beautiful nature, must necessarily have a bad taste.

And yet we see different tastes prevail in persons and nations, who have the reputation of being learned and polite. Shall we then be bold enough

enough to prefer our own to their's; and condemn them by comparison? this would be the height of folly and injustice; since particular tastes may be different, and even opposite, and yet be alike good, each in itself. And the reason of this lies partly in the richness of nature, and partly in the limits assigned the heart and mind of man.

Nature is infinitely rich in objects, and each of these objects may be considered an infinite number of ways, as will appear by the following examples. Let us suppose a model placed in a painter's room; the artist may copy this under as many appearances as there are points of sight for it to be viewed in. Alter the attitude and position, and you will have a new order of strokes and combinations offer themselves to the drawer; now, as the position of the same model may be varied *ad infinitum*, and as these variations may be again multiplied by the different points of sight they fall under, which are likewise infinite; it follows, that the same object may be represented under an infinite number of appearances, every one different, and yet each regular in itself, and entirely conformable to nature and good taste.

Cicero has treated the conspiracy of Cataline with all the majesty and force of oratorical eloquence, joined to the dignity of consular authority. He proves, describes, exaggerates; his words are so many flashes of fire. Sallust appears in a different point of light; in him we have an historian who considers events coolly and dispassion-



sionately; his narrative is a simple exposition of facts, which affects us only in proportion to the nature of the facts themselves.

The French and Italian music have each their particular character. The one is not good music, nor is the other bad. They are two sisters; or rather two faces of the same object.

To go yet farther. Nature has an infinite number of designs with which we are acquainted, but she has an infinite number of others which we know nothing of. We run no risque therefore in boldly attributing to her whatsoever we conceive as possible, according to the laws of things. *Id est maxime naturale*, says Quintillian, *quod fieri natura optime patitur*. We may form in imagination beings which have no where existence, and yet may be natural. We may unite those parts which are separated in nature, and separate those which are united. She is pliable and ready to assist us, provided we respect her fundamental laws, and do not go about to couple serpents with birds, or sheep with tygers.

*Non ut serpentes avibus gementur tigribus agni.* Hor.

Monsters are horrible and shocking in nature; in art they are only ridiculous. It is enough then if we paint what is probable, the poet can go no farther.

Tho' Theocritus describes the shepherds lives in the most simple manner, and Virgil has ventured

tured only to add some little degree of elegance and politeness to it, yet this was no law for Fontenelle; he has gone farther, and amused himself with an agreeable kind of masquerade, in giving us a court in pastoral life; and has had the address to join delicacy and spirit with the rustic chaplet; in a word, he has filled his subject. We can find no fault in his performance, except it be the title, which should have differed from those of Theocritus and Virgil.

His idea is beautiful, his plan ingenious: nor can there any thing be more delicately executed. But with all this, he has given it a title which deceives us.

We have now, I think, sufficiently demonstrated the richness of nature.

But is it possible that one man can make use of treasures at once? the number of them must certainly confound him, and hinder him from enjoying them as he ought. Nature, aware of this, and always watchful over our interests, has given to every individual a certain portion of taste, which determines him principally to certain objects. This it has done in forming our organs in such a manner, as to be attracted by one part of nature rather than by the whole. Well-formed souls have a general taste for all that is natural, and at the same time a kind of master-affection which attaches them to certain objects in particular, and this affection fixes the talents, and by fixing preserves them.

Let

Let every one then be indulged in his own taste, provided it be for some part of nature; let some admire the chearful, others the serious. These love a gay image, and those what is grand and majestic, &c. Such objects are in nature, and are mutually heightened by the contrast. There are some happy geniusses capable of taking them all in, the objects themselves giving the particular cast to their sentiments. They admire the serious in a grave subject, and the comic in a facetious one, and can as readily weep at a tragedy, as laugh at a comedy. But am I to be blamed, if by chance my sensation is confined to narrower limits? no certainly, I rather deserve pity.

But tastes cannot be different without ceasing to be good, unless their objects are likewise different: for if they have the same object, and that one approves it, and the other disapproves it, one of these two tastes must be bad; and, again, if one approves or condemns it in a certain degree, and that the other goes beyond, or falls short of this degree, then one of these will be less pure, comprehensive, and delicate than the other; and consequently must be bad, with respect to that which is in the precise point of perfection.

## SECOND

## SECOND INFERENCE.

As art is professedly an imitator of nature, it is by comparison only that we can judge of it.

## Two Methods of Comparison.

**D**ID the polite arts exhibit only an indifferent spectacle, or a cold imitation of an object quite foreign to us, then might we judge of their productions, as we now do of a picture, by simply comparing it with the original: but as they are formed to please us, they require the suffrage of the heart, as well as that of reason.

There is a certain ideal beauty and perfection in poetry, painting, and in all other arts: the mind may conceive a work of nature quite perfect, and without defect, as Plato has conceived his republic, Xenophon his monarchy, and Cicero his orator. As this idea would be the fixed point of perfection, the value of all works might be estimated by their degree of similitude or unlikeness to this point: but if it was absolutely necessary to be possessed of this idea in the manner we should be possessed of it, viz. not only for every species of production, but likewise for every subject in each of those species, it would, I fancy, be no easy matter to meet with an Aristarchus (*a*).

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(*a*) Aristarchus was a very great critic, who lived in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and was cotemporary with Callimachus; he wrote about fourscore volumes of commentaries on Homer, Aristophanes,



It is very easy to follow an author, or even to get the start of him in his matter, so far as a certain point. When once we are masters of the subject, we can easily perceive that there are certain images, so obvious and natural as not to be possibly omitted in the work. If we find the author has employed these, we are pleased with him for it; and if he has likewise employed others of a different kind, which we did not perceive, and which on examination we find to be founded in nature, we give him a greater degree of applause. But he may go yet farther, he may shew us images we never believed possible to exist, and even oblige us to approve of them, as they are natural, and arise from his subject. This is the case with respect to Shakespeare, who painted immediately from the mind, as being possessed of all the secrets of sublime nature. He always paints of his own head: we allow and admire every thing he does: he raises us on his own wings, and we find ourselves transported into his sphere. Who of us, now, will be bold enough to assert that there are degrees yet beyond what he has attempted? That the poet has stopt in the mid-way? That his wings were not sufficiently strong to carry him to the end

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Aristophanes, and all the other Greek poets: he revised and corrected Homer, which work is left with the rest of his criticisms: these were so nice and penetrating that he was commonly called the diviner, on account of his great sagacity, so that our author, in this place, uses his name as a general one for a good critic.

of his flight? Such a one must at least have measured the space with his eye.

"*This work hath faults;*" such a judgment is in the power of most people to make; but, "*This work has not all the beauties it is capable of,*" is another which is reserved only for wits of the first order. We may easily perceive the reason both of the one and the other. To give the first judgment, no more is required than to compare the performance with the ordinary ideas which are always with us when we would judge of arts, and which offer us plans or sketches at least, by which we may discover the principal faults in the execution; but for the second, we must have taken in all the possible extent of art in the subject chosen by the author: a talent scarcely granted to the greatest genius.

There is another kind of comparison, besides that of art with elegant nature, viz. of the different impressions produced in us by the different productions of the same art in one kind; and this comparison is made by the taste alone, whereas the former is made by the mind; but as the decisions of the taste should, as well as those of the mind, be grounded upon the choice of the objects they imitate, their quality, and the manner in which they are imitated; therefore in this decision of the taste we shall have that of the mind also. For instance,

In reading the satyrs of Boileau. I perceive the first gives me pleasure; this sentiment proves the performance

performance to be good; but does not prove it to be excellent. I go on; I feel my pleasure encrease in proportion as I advance: the author's genius continues rising more and more till he comes to the ninth satyr: my taste rises with him. The author can now rise no higher; my taste then remains at the same point with his genius. Thus the degree of sensations, caused in me by that satyr, is my rule for judging of all other productions of that kind.

What is our idea of a perfect tragedy? Doubtless it is that which affects the spectator in the most lively and lasting manner. Read the least perfect of the many tragedies of Oedipus, you will find yourself affected thereby to a certain degree; take up another, and thus go on in order till you come to that of Sophocles, which is esteemed the master-piece of the tragic muse, and even a model for the rules themselves.

Now in the course of your reading, you will have remarked in some, certain digressions that disgust you, in others a cold and insipid declamation; in this, a frothiness and false majesty of style; in that, forced beauties, substituted in the place of real ones, rejected by the author through the apprehension of appearing a copyist; whereas in Sophocles you have an action proceeding in a regular manner, as it were almost of itself, and without any apparent art. You have felt the emotions encrease at each scene; the style is noble and elegant; you find your ideas raised without calling



talling off your attention from the subject. Attached to the fate of the unhappy Oedipus, you weep for his misfortunes, and are fond of your grief. Remember what kind and degree of feeling you have experienced, and it shall, for the future, be your rule to go by. If another author indeed is happy enough still to add to it, your taste becomes more elevated, and more exquisite, but till then it must be by this degree of perfection that you judge of other tragedies; which will be good and bad, more or less, according as they are more or less conformable to these degrees, and to the chain of sentiments you have already experienced.

Let us advance yet a step farther, and endeavour to reach this ideal beauty, which is the supreme law of imitation; to this end let us peruse the most excellent works of the same kind. We are ravished with the enthusiasm, and rapid flights of Homer, and with the gravity and exactness of Virgil: Shakespear elevates us with his grandeur; Otway charms us with his sweetness. Let us make a happy mixture of the single qualities of these great men, and from thence we shall be enabled to form an ideal model, much superior to any thing that exists; and this model shall be the sovereign and infallible rule of all our decisions. It is thus the stoics fixed the standard of human wisdom, by the ideal sage of their own creation; and that Juvenal found the greatest poets beneath



the idea he had conceived of poetry, by a sentiment which he wanted words to express.

*Qualem nequeo monstrare & sentio tantum.*

### THIRD INFERENCE.

A natural taste, and a taste for arts, being the same, there is consequently but one sole taste which extends over every thing, even morals not excepted.

THE mind immediately acquiesces in the justness of this inference; for let us but cast our eyes on the history of nations, and we shall there see humanity and the social virtues following the polite arts. By them Athens grew to be the school of delicacy, and Rome, in spite of her original rudeness, became polite. It is through them that all nations, in proportion to the commerce they had with the muses, became more humane, and more sensible of the elegant passions.

It is not possible that the grossest eyes, seeing every day master-pieces of sculpture and painting, having before them the most regular and magnificent edifices; that geniusses, I say, in the least disposed to virtue and the graces, after reading works nobly conceived, and delicately expressed, should not catch a certain habitude of order, grandeur and delicacy.

But as history makes the most eminent virtues bloom forth, and sets them to view with all their attractions, why should not the prudence of Ulysses, the valor of Achilles kindle the same noble fire

fire in our breasts? Why should not our manners be softened by the elegant productions of a Bion or a Moschus? Why should not so many objects which daily surround us (where grandeur is united to the graceful) give us the taste for what is beautiful, decent, and delicate? A man, says Plutarch, who has learnt music from his infancy, can never fail of having a taste for what is good, and consequently a hatred of what is bad, even in things that belong not to music; he will never dishonor himself by any meanness. He will be useful to his country, careful in private life: all his actions and words will be governed by the rules of discretion, and bear the characters of decency, moderation and order (a). But we know that our forefathers, and those of them too as were most conspicuous for their learning, have clapped their hands at burlesque representations of the most sacred mysteries of religion; whereas a clown of the present age, would be shocked at the indecency of such a spectacle.

This is the progress of taste: by little and little the public are caught by examples. By seeing, they (even without taking notice of it) insensibly form themselves upon what they have seen. Great artists produce in their works the most elegant strokes of nature: those who have had some edu-

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(a) Μητὲ ἐργῷ μητὲ λόγῳ χρώμενος ἀνορμῶσθαι  
 σοφῶν αἰεὶ καὶ παντὰ χεὶρ τὸ πρέπον, καὶ σωφρονεῖν,  
 καὶ κοσμίον.

cation; immediately applaud them; even the common people are struck; *interdum vulgus rectum videt*. They apply the model without thinking of it. They by degrees retrench what is luxuriant in themselves, and add what is wanting. Their manners, discourse, and outward appearance, all seem to be reforming, and this reformation passes even into their souls. They resolve that their thoughts, when they come from them, shall appear just, natural and proper, to merit the esteem of other men. In a word, they determine that the polite man shall shine forth and shew himself by a lively and graceful expression, equally remote from rudeness and affectation: two vices as contrary to taste in society, as they are in the polite arts; for taste has every where the same rules. It requires that we erase every thing that can give an unamiable impression, and that we offer all that can produce an agreeable one. Every one should study this general principle as far as he is able, and draw the proper practical conclusions for his direction; the farther this is carried, the more delicate and comprehensive will be his taste.

Was the christian religion practised in the same manner as it is believed, it would do that in one moment, which the arts could at best but imperfectly finish after years, or perhaps ages of pains and trouble. The perfect christian is the perfect citizen. He has the exterior of virtue because he has the foundation. He is unwilling to offend or injure any one; on the contrary, he applies him-  
self



self by all the possible means in his power, to oblige and do good to all around him.

But as for the greatest number of us who are christians only by belief, it is highly necessary for the advantage of social life, that men should be inspired with such sentiments as may in some measure supply the place of the gospel-charity. Now the sentiments can be communicated to us by the arts alone, which by imitating nature, draw us nearer to her, and present us with models of that simplicity, uprightness, and benevolence which she extends equally to all mankind.

#### FOURTH and LAST INFERENCE.

The importance of forming the taste betimes, and the methods to be observed in doing it,

**M**AN can no longer be happy than while his taste is conformable to his reason: a heart which rebels against the light of the understanding, or a mind which condemns the emotions of the heart, can only produce a kind of intestine war, which must necessarily poison every hour of life. To be able to assure the union of these two essential parts of the soul, it will be necessary to be as attentive to the due forming the taste (a),

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(a) In this place, as well as the preceding article, the word taste is taken in its greatest extent, viz. for a sentiment inclining us to what appears to be good, or diverting us from what appears bad: and taken in this sense, it may be called taste in its beginning, passion in its progress, and madness or folly in its excess.



as the reason; and indeed as the latter rarely loses her rights, always sufficiently declaring herself, even though we refuse to hear her, it therefore appears that taste has a right to the chief place in our attention; more especially when we reflect that it is the first exposed to corruption, the most easily corrupted, and when so, the most difficultly cured, and lastly, that it has of the two, much the greatest influence on our conduct.

Good taste is an habitual love of order, and as we have already said, influences the manners, as well as the several productions of genius. A symmetry of parts between themselves and with the whole, are as necessary to the conduct of a moral action, as to a piece of painting. This love of order is a virtue in the soul, which extends itself to every object that has any connection with or relation to us, taking the name of taste when concerned in things of pleasure or amusement, and retaining that of virtue when it relates to the manners. One may easily perceive then, what effects may arise from a neglect of this sentiment in those of a tender age.

Were we to judge of the tastes and passions of men, not so much from their object, and the endeavors they use to attain it, as from the emotions and troubles they raise in our souls, we should find that they were no more influenced by difference of ages than difference of conditions. The wrath of a private man is not in itself a whit less violent than that of a monarch, though the outward effects

fects resulting from it may be less terrible: a father diverts himself with the forwardness, ambition, or greediness of his little one in arms; these are but sparks of temper in the young one, it is true, but such sparks, as nothing but the want of fuel prevents from bursting into an outrageous flame. The organs have already received the impression: the bent is taken, and when hereafter endeavors are seriously used to reform and get the better of it, if we meet with an unexpected resistance the fault is thrown upon nature, which in justice should be imputed to a long tolerated habitude.

Although the soul astonished and surprised to find itself imprisoned and confined, may during the first days of life remain in a state of stupidity and dulness, it does not follow that she is not properly awake 'till she begins to reason; on the contrary she is quickly roused by the calls of necessity: the organs soon inform her that they stand in need of her orders, and the correspondence between body and soul is established by means of the reciprocal impressions they make upon each other. From that instant the soul broods in silence over her faculties, which in due time she properly prepares, and brings into action. By the help and ministry of the eyes, the ears, the feeling, and the other senses, she assembles a set of lights and ideas which serve her as provisions for life; and as it is the sentiment that alone presides over and directs all these acquisitions, it necessarily fol-

lows, that it must have already made very considerable progress before reason has begun to exert herself, or even taken the first step.

Surely then we should not be inattentive to such progresses, since we see them so often repugnant to the interests of reason, continually exciting commotions in her empire, and appearing even formidable enough to make her their slave, or at least strip her of a great part of her rights. If they are then so far from being indifferent, can there be no means found to keep them under proper regulation, or prevent their going greater lengths? One would imagine there were not indeed, by the little care that we see taken of the first four or five years of infancy; all the attention being then taken up with the wants of the body, without reflecting that this is the very time in which the organs take that consistence which prepares the morals, and even the talents; and that one part of the conformation of these organs depends on the motions and impressions which come from the soul.

So long as the soul exercises herself only by sentiment, she is wholly under the dominion of taste: she takes no time to deliberate, because she is instantly determined by the present impression. It is from the object alone that she receives her laws. Since that is the case, it is necessary that in these times she should be presented with such objects only as are fitted to produce soft and pleasing sentiments, and be carefully kept from the knowledge

ledge of those which she could not be brought to relinquish without throwing her into melancholy or impatience; and by this means might the mind of a man be formed from its tenderest infancy, to that habitude of good-humour and affability, which not only makes himself happy, but likewise every one concerned with him.

As soon as man begins to shake off that state of servitude in which he was held by exterior objects, and begins to enter into possessions of himself by reason and liberty, the object of attention is to cultivate his mind: the taste is still entirely neglected, or if it is at all thought of it is only to be destroyed by being forced; never reflecting that it is the most delicate part of the soul, and that which requires being managed with the nicest art. One should appear to follow it, when one intends to reform it; for every thing is lost if once the hand is perceived.

..... Tunc fallere solers,

Apposita intortos extendit regula mores.

PERS. Sat. 5.

This was the great and most excellent talent of him whom Persius had for a master.

The moment that a child opens the eyes of the mind and beholds the universe, the heavens, the stars, the planets, plants and animals, he is astonished at every thing around him; he asks a thousand questions; he is curious to know every thing.



thing. 'Tis nature all this while that is urging him on, and guiding his steps, and guides him securely. It is just that this new citizen of the world should, on his first arrival, be made acquainted with the place of his abode, and the conveniencies prepared for him therein: this ray of knowledge is to be followed; this curiosity satisfied and quickened as much as possible by success. Instead of this, we see it stopt in its progress, or stifled in the birth, to substitute in its room a disagreeable constraint, which puts the spirit upon operations that disgust renders fruitless, and which often extinguish for ever that laudable curiosity which nature intended as an incentive to the mind, and a kind of germ for the sciences.

Those who have the care of children's education, seem to have placed at the entrance to study the very things which appear the most calculated to disgust and turn them from it; such as abstracted rules, dry maxims, and general principles of metaphysics. But in the name of reason, are these amusements for children? Art has two parts; speculation and practice; either of these may precede the other, so that they be not wholly separated. Children then should be presented with that first which appears the best suited to their capacity, and the most agreeable to their age and character; that abounds the most with sensible objects; gives the most play and movement to the spirit; and in a word, that which promises the least trouble and the most success.

For

For it is success that nourishes taste, and success and taste together discover the talent. These three are inseparable; so that if after having for a certain time tried one method, the mind does not seem pleased with it, it is a sure sign such method is not calculated to raise it to any degree of perfection therein. It would be in vain, in such a case, to have recourse to constraint; this would only weaken the taste yet more, and render its objects more disagreeable. The only resource left, if resolved not to give over the trial, will be to present them under another face, and if they do not please better then, it will be much more eligible to give them up entirely, than by an obstinate prosecution to throw the mind into a train of sentiments, which might occasion it to lose its good-humour and softness; virtues whose loss no other talent can recompense.

There is yet another way to be tried; talents are as various as the necessities of human life; nature has been provident there, who like a tender and beneficent mother, never suffers any man to be born without giving him some one useful quality to recommend him to the rest of mankind. But if this is neglected you are only acting against the designs of nature, who will consequently resist your project with all her force, and seldom fails of rendering it abortive.

## S E C T. III.

Where the principle of imitation is proved by applying it to the different arts.

**W**E shall divide this section into three articles, wherein we shall prove that the general rules for poetry, painting, music and dancing are included in the imitation of elegant nature.

## A R T I C L E I.

The general characters of poetry are included in the imitation of elegant nature.

## C H A P. I.

In which the opinions against the principle of imitation are refuted.

**I**F the proofs we have hitherto brought have been found sufficient to fix the principle of imitation, it will be needless to spend time in refuting the different opinions of authors concerning the essence of poetry; or if we should stop a moment on this subject, it will not be with an intention of formally compacting them, but only to give a short and cursory exposition of them, which will be more than sufficient to overturn any little scruples they may have raised in the reader's mind.

Some have pretended that the essence of poetry lay in fiction: and here we must explain this term,

term, and settle its real signification. If by fiction they would understand the same thing as feigning, or  *fingere* in Latin, in that case the word fiction should properly signify only the artificial imitation of characters, manners, actions, discourse, &c. &c. so that to feign would signify the same thing as to represent, or rather to counterfeit; and then this opinion is one and the same with that we have already established.

But if they are for confining the signification of this term, and that by fiction they understand the particular ministry or agency of the gods, which are introduced by the poet for the better putting in motion the secret springs of his poem, then it is evident that fiction is not essential to poetry; otherwise tragedy, comedy, and most of the ode kind would cease to be true poems, which would contradict the most universally received ideas.

Lastly, if by fiction they mean to signify the figures which give life to inanimate things, and a body to insensible ones, causing them to speak and act, such as metaphors and allegories, then will fiction be no more than a poetic turn of expression which might equally well agree with prose. It is the language of a passion which disdains to express itself after the common way, and is the attire, not the body of poetry.

Others have fancied that the essence of poetry consisted in versification.

The multitude struck with the measure which



is so sensibly the characteristic of poetic expression, and distinguishes it from prose, give the name of poem to whatever is in verse: history, physics, theology, morality, and the whole body of arts and sciences which should naturally belong to prose, are by this means made the subjects of poetry. The ear struck by a regular cadence; the imagination heated by a few bold and striking images, which stood in need of being authorised by poetic licence; sometimes even the art of the author himself, who being naturally a poet may have communicated part of his own fire to matters otherwise dry in themselves, and which appeared not susceptible of any graces; all these things together seduce and carry away minds but little instructed in the nature of things; and as soon as they perceive the outward appearance of poetry, there they stop, without giving themselves the trouble to enquire any farther. They perceive it is verse and immediately cry out a poem, merely because it is not prose.

This prejudice is of as antient a date as poetry. According to Homer (a) and Titus Livius (b), the first poems were hymns, which the people sang, and danced to them at the same time. Now in

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(a) . . . Πολὺς δ' ὕμναισι θεοὶ ὀρώρεαι,  
 Κούροι δ' ὀρχησῆρες ἐδίνεον ἐν δ' ἄρα τοῖσιν,  
 Ἀὐλοὶ φορμαγγεῖς τε βοὴν εἶχον. *Iliad.* 18.

(b) Et Tit. Liv. lib. 1. I. Dec. *Per urbem ire canentes carmina cum eripodiis solemnique saltatu jussis.*

order

order to form a concert from these three modes of expression, words, song and dance, it was absolutely necessary that they should have some common measure or time by which they might all three be made to fall in together, otherwise the harmony would be quite disconcerted. This measure then was like the coloring in a picture, which is the first thing that takes the eye, whereas the imitation, which is the ground or design of the piece, escapes the superficial observer.

However this measure did in no wise constitute what is called a true poem,

... Neque enim concludere versum

Dixeris esse satis. . . . . Hor. Sat. 4. lib. 1.

'Tis not enough the measured feet too close.

FRANCIS.

For if that alone was sufficient, poetry would be mere child's play, a trifling arrangement of words which the least transposition could at any time destroy,

... Eripias si

Tempora certa modosque & quod prius ordine  
verbum est,

Posterius facias, præponens ultima primis. Ibid.

The cadence take and measure from the line,

Or change their order and the words transpose. Id.

And then the masque taken off, the simple and naked prose appears, and the poet is no more.

But

But it is not thus with true poetry, reverse the order, displace the words, or break the measure as you will; it may by this means lose its harmony indeed, but will lose nothing of its nature. The poetry of the matter still remains, and may be found in the members, howsoever dispersed.

Invenias etiam disjecti membra poetæ.

Ibid.

The scatter'd poet's limbs may yet be found. Ibid.

Notwithstanding this, we do not deny that a poem divested of versification would cease to be a poem; we have already declared that measure and harmony are the colors of poetry, without which it would be a mere print; it might represent indeed the contour or form of an object, or at most the local lights and shades; but that perfect coloring which belongs to art alone to bestow would be wanting.

The third opinion is that which places the essence of poetry in enthusiasm.

This sentiment we have already described, and sufficiently determined its several functions, which extend equally to all the fine arts. It claims a place likewise in works of prose, since passion and its various degrees exerts itself no less in the pulpit than on the theatre. Cicero would have his orator *vehemens ut procella, excitatus ut torrens, incensus ut fulmen; tonat, fulgurat, & rapidis elequentiæ fluctibus cuncta proruit & proturbat.* Has the poetic enthusiasm itself any thing more violent or fierce than this? and when Pericles

Tonnoit

*Tonnoit & foudroyoit & renverfoit la Grece*

*Thunder'd and lighten'd and confounded Greece.*

Was it possible for the enthusiastie rapture to reign more strongly even in the odes of Pindar than it must have done in his speeches?

But this noble fire cannot always be kept up in oratory; can it even in poetry? Were this absolutely necessary to the being of a poem, how many performances, now so deservedly esteemed excellent, would then cease to be so! Tragedy the epopœia, nay the ode itself would no longer be poems but in a few of their most striking passages; for the rest of the work having only in an ordinary degree of warmth would want the distinguishing characteristic of poetry.

The sticklers for this opinion, cite in favor of enthusiasm that famous passage of Horace,

*Ingenium cui sit, cui mens divinior atque os*

*Magna sonaturum, des nominis hujus honorem.*

..... Whom real genius fires,

Whom the diviner soul of verse inspires,

Who talks true greatness, let him boldly claim

The sacred honors of a poet's name. FRANCIS.

But this passage does in no wise decide the question; for it is not the nature of the poetry itself, but only the qualities necessary to form a compleat poet that are there alluded to; two things as different as the painter and his picture. Besides, allowing that



that these lines may be applied to the nature of poetry likewise, yet it does not establish this opinion. Aristotle, who makes the essence of poetry to consist in imitation, requires his poet to be actuated by the same genius, and animated with the same divine fury.

Horace had no intention to give an exact definition of poetry in this passage; he has confined himself to a part, without taking in the whole. It is one of those sort of definitions which are neither entirely true, nor entirely false, and are only made use of to stop the mouths of such cavillers as do not appear worthy of a more serious refutation; and this was just the case of the Latin poet at the time he wrote these lines.

A few critics of a middling merit, animated by a personal interest against his satires, had reproached him with being too severe a poet; Horace answers them after the manner of Socrates, less with a design of instructing them than to expose their wretched ignorance. He stops them short at the first word, and gives them to understand that they even do not know what poetry is, and for this purpose he draws a picture of it, which no way agrees with what they had styled cutting poetry. To confirm this idea, and augment their confusion, he cites the opinion of certain writers who had put the question whether comedy might be reckoned a just poem: *Quidam quæsiere*. By this it appears that Horace thought of nothing less than giving a rigorous or strict definition of poetry,

poetry, but only to set forth what was most noble and dazzling in this art, and which agreed the least with that species of it which composed his satires; so that it would be a gross mistake and abuse of one's own understanding to measure all kinds of poetry, or every sort of poem by this pretended definition.

But it may be objected that enthusiasm and sensation are the same thing; now it is allowed that the end of poetry is to produce sensation, to affect and to please, should not the poet then himself experience the same sentiments with which he would inspire others? but what conclusion can be drawn from this? supposing that the sentiments of enthusiasm are the principle and end of poetry, must they be for that reason the essence? yes, if you will have the cause and the effect, the means and the end, to be one and the same thing, for here the nicest precision is required.

Let us then confine ourselves to imitation, which is the most probable method, as it includes enthusiasm, fiction, and even versification itself, as the means requisite to a just and perfect imitation of objects; this we have already seen, and we shall perceive it still plainer as we go on.

## CHAP. II.

The divisions of poetry are to be found in imitation.

**T**RUE poetry consisting essentially in imitation, it is in imitation itself that we must look for its different divisions.

Mankind

Mankind acquires the knowledge of external things by the eyes or ears, because they see the things themselves, or hear them related by others. This double method of acquiring knowledge, produces the first division in poetry, separating it into two different species, the one of which is called the dramatic, wherein we have the things represented before our eyes, or hear the discourse of the persons immediately concerned; the other the epic, wherein we neither see nor hear any thing directly or by ourselves, but have all related to us.

*Aut agitur res in scenis, aut acta refertur.*

*Hor. de Art poet.*

..... On the stage

Some things are acted, others only told. Roscom.

Now if from these two species a third be formed of a mixed, that is composed of the epic and the dramatic, and which takes in both spectacle and narration, then all the rules of this third species will be found included in those of the two others.

The above division which is founded only on the manner in which poetry exhibits objects, is followed by another, which is taken from the very quality of the objects that are the subject of poetry.

From the divinity itself down to the meanest reptile, every thing that can be supposed capable of action, is alike the subject of poetry, as being  
liable

liable to imitation. Thus as there are gods, kings, simple citizens, shepherds and animals, all which art has taken a delight to imitate in their real or probable actions: from hence we have operas, tragedies, comedies, pastorals and fables; and this is the second division of poetry, each member of which may be again subdivided, according to the diversity of objects, though in the same kind.

These several kinds of poetry have each their particular rules, which we shall examine more at large in the second part of this work; but there are likewise a set of rules common to them all, arising from the nature of the things or particular form of the poetic style, to which we shall give a place here in this, and prove that they are all included in the imitation of elegant nature.

### CHAPTER III.

The general rules for the poetry of the things included in imitation.

**H**AD nature thought proper to discover herself to us in all her glory, I mean, in her utmost perfection in every object, these rules which cost such pains to find out, and which we follow with so much caution, and often danger, would then have been needless to the formation and progress of the arts. Artists would have scrupulously given us all appearances as they rose to the view, without being obliged to pick and chuse.

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Imitation alone would have made, and comparison judged of the performance.

But as on the contrary the most beautiful and agreeable parts of nature lye blended and confounded with such a variety of others, a choice is absolutely necessary; and to enable us to make such a choice with greater certainty, Taste invented and proposed rules, the principles of which are established in the second section; it now remains only to draw the proper consequences, and apply them to poetry.

### FIRST GENERAL RULE.

The useful should be joined to the agreeable in poetry.

**I**F in nature and in arts those things touch us most which carry with them the greatest benefit to ourselves (*a*), it follows, that such works as have the double advantage of producing both pleasure and profit, will be much more affecting than such as only produce one of the two. This is the sentiment of Horace:

*Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,  
Lectorem delectando pariterque monendo.*

*Hor. de Art poet.*

Profit and pleasure then to mix with art,

To inform the judgment, not offend the heart,

Shall gain all votes. . . . . FRANCIS.

(*a*) See chap. III. of the second part.

The end of poetry is to please; and to please, in exciting the passions. But to give us a perfect and substantial pleasure, it ought not to excite any but those which it is of consequence to keep in motion, and never such as are contrary to wisdom and virtue. Detestation of wickedness, which is attended by shame, fear, and repentance; compassion for the unhappy, which has almost as extended an utility as humanity itself; admiration of great examples, which leaves in the heart a spur to virtue; these are the passions which poetry ought to treat of: poetry was never designed to stir up ill in bad hearts, but to be the most exquisite delight for virtuous souls. Virtue placed in certain lights will always be an interesting object. There is naturally, even in minds of the most corrupted cast, a voice which is always pleading in her behalf; and which good men hearken to with so much the greater satisfaction, for the finding in it a proof of their own perfection.

The great poets never intended their works, which were the fruits of so much pains and labor, merely as amusements for a light and frothy wit, or to rouse the drowsiness of an idle Midas: had this been their only end, would they have been the great men they are? no, we should entertain a far different opinion of their views, if we would do them justice. The tragic and comic poetry of the antients were filled with examples of the dreadful vengeance of the gods, or the just correction of men; and inculcated this necessary lesson

to the spectators, that to avoid both the one and the other they were not only to seem good, but absolutely to be so.

The works of Homer and Virgil are not vain romances, where the mind is led away at the will of an idle imagination: on the contrary, we should regard them as so many noble bodies of doctrine, as books of a nation, containing the history of the state, the spirit of the government, the fundamental principles of morality, the dogmas of religion, and every duty essential to society; and all this cloathed with every rich and grand expression that could be conceived by geniusses almost divine.

The Iliad and the Æneid are as much the pictures of the Greek and Roman nations, as the Miser in Moliere is that of avarice; and as the fable of this comedy is only the canvas prepared to receive, in a certain order, a number of true strokes taken from society, so also the wrath of Achilles, and the establishment of Eneas in Italy, ought to be considered only as the cloth of a noble and magnificent picture, in which the artist has had the dexterity to paint manners, customs, laws, counsels, &c. disguised sometimes in allegories, sometimes in predictions, and sometimes openly exposed; now and then varying a circumstance, as that of time, place, or actor, which not only raises and enlivens the subject, but gives the reader the pleasure of studying, and consequently of believing that his instruction is owing to his own

own care and reflection, which never fails of flattering his self-love.

Anacreon, so well skilled in the art of pleasing, and who indeed seems never to have had any other end in view, was sufficiently apprized of the great importance of blending the useful with the agreeable: other poets strew the roses of poetry over their precepts in order to conceal the harshness of them; he, by a refinement of delicacy, scattered instructions in the midst of roses: he knew that the most delightful images, when they teach us nothing, have a certain insipidity, which never fails to leave behind it a disgust for the things themselves; he knew that there must be something substantial to give them that force, that energy that penetrates; and that if wisdom has sometimes occasion to be enlivened by a little folly, folly in its turn ought to be invigorated by a little wisdom.

Read Cupid stung by a bee, Mars wounded by the arrows of love, Cupid chained by the muses, and we shall easily perceive the poet has not formed these beautiful images to instruct, but has placed instruction in the midst of them to make it the more pleasing. Virgil is certainly a greater poet than Horace; his paintings are more rich and beautiful; his versification is admirable: Horace however is much more read: the principal reason is that he has at this time the merit of being more instructive to us of the present age than Virgil, who perhaps was more so to the Romans of his time.



But we are not to imagine from what has been said, that poetry may not at times give itself up to an agreeable mirth; the muses are chearful, and will always be friends to the graces; but little poems are rather sports and relaxations to them than works. They owe other services to mankind, whose life is not to be spent in a perpetual round of amusement: and the example of nature which they propose for a model, teaches them to do nothing considerable without a wise design, which may tend to the improvement of those for whom they labor. So that as they imitate nature in her principles, her tastes, and her emotions, they ought likewise to imitate her in the views and end she proposes herself in her works.

## SECOND RULE.

That every poem should have an action.

**I**nanimate things may enter into poetry; this is beyond a doubt; and they are as essential therein as in nature: but then they have only an accidental place, and as dependents on other things more proper to affect. Of this kind are the actions, which as they all arise from the mind, will, liberty, and passions of man, are as it were a picture in miniature of human nature.

Hence we see the greatest painters never fail to throw in some traces of humanity into their rudest and most naked landscapes; such as an antique tomb, or the ruins of some old edifice, and for

this

this essential reason, they paint for men.

Every action is an emotion, consequently supposes a point of departure, a point to be arrived at, and the route, or way, by which we arrive at it; or two extremes and a middle part; three parts which may give a poem such an extent, as may, according to its nature, cause it to exercise the mind properly without fatiguing it.

The first of these parts supposes nothing to have gone before, but requires something to follow it; this is by Aristotle called the beginning: the second supposes something to have gone before, and requires something to follow after; this is the middle: the third and last part supposes something before, and requires nothing after it; and this is the end. Every action that is interesting has three parts, the undertaking, the obstacles arising to this undertaking, and the success that surmounts these obstacles; and this gives birth to the prologue, or exposition of the subject, to the intrigue, or plot, and the unravelling of the plot: this is the common extent of the forces of our minds, and the source of its agreeable sensations.

### THIRD RULE.

The action should be remarkable, continued, simple, and varied.

**T**HE genius would have no occasion for the assistance of poetry to help out nature, had it nothing but the common actions of life to exhibit: our whole life is but one continued action;

society itself is but a perpetual motion of the persons which compose it, and who are all in action for some particular end. Therefore if poetry would attract, affect, and fix us her's, she must present us with some one action, distinguished from a thousand other common ones, by something remarkable, singular, and peculiar to itself.

The singularity of an action consists either in the thing itself acted or done; as when Augustus in Corneille is deliberating with Cinna and Maximus, both joined in a conspiracy against him, whether or not he shall quit the empire, or in the secret springs employed to attain a particular end, or as when the same Augustus pardoning his enemies thereby disarms them. These springs consist either in great virtues or great vices, a finesse d'esprit, or an extraordinary force of genius, by which the several incidents are made to take a turn entirely unexpected, and different from what every one imagined: and this singularity in the action excites our curiosity, and attaches us to it, because it affords us new impressions, and enlarges the sphere of our ideas.

But it is not sufficient for an action to be singular or remarkable; the taste requires yet other qualities in it: if the springs abovementioned become too complicated the plot grows tedious; on the other hand, if they are too plain and simple, the imagination grows languid for want of exercise. An action then should be simple, but not too much so; if the situations, characters, and interests

interests of the several persons in the piece resemble each other too nearly, they must necessarily disgust us, and if the action is interrupted by an incident absolutely foreign to the main design, a piece thus badly tacked to the rest of the drapery, will displease us, be it never so rich or beautiful. The mind, once put into motion, cannot bear to be stopped abruptly, or diverted from the point in view: on this consideration the action should be varied at the same time that it is continued; that is to say, that its several parts, however different in themselves, should mutually include each other, so as to form one whole complete and apparently natural action.

And these several qualities would be all found in an historical action, supposing it to be highly perfect; but as such actions are seldom if ever found in nature, it is to poetry alone we are to be indebted for this pleasing representation.

#### FOURTH RULE.

Relating to the characters, conduct, and number of the actors.

**I**N nature or common society, which are here one and the same thing, we may often take notice of actions wherein the actors are needlessly multiplied, so as to confound rather than assist each other, and by this means seldom act in concert; their characters are badly finished, or rather they have no character at all; their operations



are slow and tedious; their thoughts low, and often false, and their language improper, weak, or filled with futilities: so that if they do altogether constitute a whole, it is a whole, made up of oddity, irregularity, or deformity, and wherein nature is rather disfigured, than adorned. What should we think of a painter, who should represent his men dwarfs, emaciated, hunch-backed, lame, &c. because they are often found so in nature?

The artists of the first ages were obliged to have recourse to the doctrine of contrarieties, to select the principles of nature, viz. order, grandeur, and the striking from amidst such a group of imperfections; and doubtless they found it easier to proceed in this method, than by selecting the best or more agreeable objects first; the mind being more strongly affected by the bad than the good.

In consequence of these observations, the following rules have been determined and established, viz. 1. That the number of actors is to be regulated, not according to the necessity of the piece, but of the action (a). The exigence of the piece is often that of the poet's likewise; who, to fill up a vacancy, or remove an obstacle, makes his actor appear or disappear without any apparent ne-

(a) To form a clear idea of the difference between the necessity of the piece, and that of the action, it will be sufficient to look into the *Horatii* of Corneille. There the necessity of the action is confined to three acts, or four at the most; but that of the piece has led the poet to make five of them.

cessity

cessity on the side of the action. Thus Virgil causes Creusa to be conveyed away by a miracle, to make room for a second marriage for his hero, without which the whole structure of his poem would necessarily fall to the ground. In like manner, some of our modern poets, to prevent too frequent, or too long soliloquies, sometimes introduce a confident entirely needless as to the movement of the action; at others, some trifling action, by way of episode, to retain, or bring back the attention of the audience to the persons concerned in the principal action, whose consequence by this means becomes divided, and in course weakened.

2. Each actor should have his particular character, and this should be the basis or principle of all his actions; whether virtuous or vicious, it is the same thing to the poetry. An Agamemnon should be haughty, an Achilles fierce, an Ulysses prudent; and if these characters are at any time diversified, it should be rather in exceeding, than falling short of their general cast. Agamemnon may be transported even to outrage, Achilles to the height of fury, and the prudence of Ulysses may border very near upon fraud.

3. They should act in the manner proper to each, and should act in no other manner. The story supposes it necessary to send spies into the camp of the Trojans. Such men then must be sent as are endued with prudence sufficient to foresee dangers, and with courage to extricate

themselves from those they could not foresee. Accordingly Ulysses and Diomedes are pitched upon. The one foresees every thing that human prudence can foresee; the other executes whatever can be expected from the most heroic courage. Each now performs his part; the person is immediately known by his action; this is the beautiful, the elegant manner of painting them!

4. Lastly, the characters should be properly contrasted, that is to say, that each should have what is particular to itself, with some sensible difference; and that these should be so represented, as mutually to arise from each other on comparing them. We meet with a thousand instances of this contrast, in the works of almost every poet and painter. Such as two brothers, the one all indulgence and tenderness, the other as sour and austere. Here we see the affectionate father opposed to an extravagant son. The surly and morose misanthrope, to the gentleman and lover of mankind, who early forgives an injury; or the good old Priam at the feet of the young and fierce Achilles, weeping, and kissing his hands, yet stained with the blood of his beloved sons. If these characters do not admit of a difference in kind, they should at least differ in degree. Thus Horatius and Curiatius are two heroes, who have each the like character of valour, but the one is more haughty, the other more humane.

## CHAP. IV.

The rules for the poetry of the stile are included in the imitation of elegant nature.

THE poetry of things; which consists in the creation and disposition of objects, owes, as we have already seen, every thing to imitation. It is the same with respect to the poetry of the stile and that of the versification, so called, by way of contradistinction to the poetry of things.

The poetry of the stile consists of four several parts, viz. thoughts, words, turns and harmony; qualifications which are found likewise in prose, as shall be more fully explained, when we come to treat of oratory. But as in arts, such as poetry, for instance, the business is not only to give us nature, but to give her to us with all the charms and attractions possible; poetry has therefore a right, in order to attain her end, of adding something by way of improvement to them, and to raise them a degree above their natural situation.

Hence the thoughts, words, and turns of expression have in poetry a certain boldness, liberty, and luxuriancy, which would in common language appear beyond bounds; such are it's expressive similes, striking metaphors, lively repetitions, and remarkable apostrophes; thus in the language of the poet. "*Aurora, daughter of the morning, opens the gates of the East; with her rosy fingers;*" thus, "*A river resting on his reverend*"  
 "urn,



"urn, sleeps calmly to the murmurs of his own stream."

"The young Zephyrs wanton round the enamelled

"meads, or, the Naiads sport and divert themselves in

"their crystal palaces." This is more than a repast, 'tis a feast :

Quæsitq; dicent cultus magis atq; colores

Insoliti, nec erit tanto ars deprensa pudori.

This licence, extensive as it may seem, is still subject to the laws of imitation, and is regulated by them : the tone, or key of the discourse is determined by the particular state and situation the person is in at the time he is speaking ; for,

Si dicentis erunt fortunis absona dicta

Romani tollent equites, peditesq; cachinnum.

HOR. Art. Poet.

But if ill suited to his deep distress

His language prove, the sons of Rome engage,

To laugh th'unhappy actor off the stage.

FRANCIS.

The fallies of the ode, and the fire of the Epopœa are authorised only by that ebriety of sentiments, or force of inspiration with which the poet is supposed to be affected at the time he is writing : otherwise, art would prejudice itself, and nature be badly imitated.

We shall not take up any more of our time with these three parts of the poetry of the stile, as it will be very easy to attain a competent idea of them,

them, from merely reading good authors: but this is not the case with the fourth or last part, viz. The harmony of stile.

Non quivis videt immodulata poemata iudex.

IDEM.

For what the croud with lavish rapture praise,  
In better judges cold contempt shall raise. IDEM.

Harmony in general is a mutual agreement, or kind of concert of two or several things one with another. It is begotten by order, and produces all the pleasures of imagination. Its powers are infinite, but it's chief and most excellent attribute is, the being the soul of the polite arts.

There are three kinds of harmony in poetry, the first is, that of the stile, which ought always to agree with the subject of the poem, and establish a just proportion between one and the other. The arts form a kind of republic, in which every one ought to hold the rank proportioned to his condition. There is a wide difference between the tone of the *Epopoia*, and that of tragedy! Nor is it less distinguishable in the other kinds of poetry, viz. comedy, lyric, pastoral, &c. (a).

If this harmony is wanting to any poem whatever, it immediately becomes a burlesque, or

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(a) Itaque & in tragedia comicum vitiosum est & in comedia turpe tragicum, & in cæteris, suus est cujusque certus sonus, & quedam intelligentibus nota vox. Cic. de Invent. cap. 2.

kind of grotesque performance, and more properly a parody than any thing else. And, if sometimes we find tragedy descend, or comedy rise in it's stile, it is only to become more on a level with their matter, which is continually subject to variation; and even this very objection may be used as a kind of proof of the principle advanced.

Essential as this harmony appears to be, yet it can be but distinguished, and unluckily authors do not always even distinguish it sufficiently. We too often find the different kinds of poetry confounded together in one piece, and meet with tragic, and comic verses together, without the least authority for it in the particular thought they are to express. Why will such authors take upon them to use the pencil, when they are totally ignorant of the nature of colouring?

*Descriptas servare voces operumq; colores*

*Cur ego si nequeo ignororq; poeta salutor?*

*HOR. Art. Poet.*

But if unknowing in the writing art,

I can't to ev'ry different stile impart

The proper strokes and colours it may claim,

Why am I honoured with a poet's name?

*FRANCIS.*

A delicate ear will discover from the very character of the verse alone, the species of performance from which it is taken. Repeat but a line from Corneille, Moliere, la Fontaine, Segrais,

or

or Rousseau, there is no being mistaken. A verse of Ovid's may be known amidst a thousand of Virgil's. There is no need of mentioning it's author; he is as much distinguished by his stile, as the heroes in Homer are by their actions.

The second kind of harmony consists in the resemblance of sounds and words with the subject of the thought. This is a rule which should be observed even by writers in prose (*a*), much more certainly by poets (*b*), accordingly we seldom find them express a thing which is naturally soft and mild, by a rude and harsh word; nor adapt a graceful expression to a rough and disagreeable object.

*Carmine non levi dicenda est scabra crepido.*

*Nec on smooth lines the grating hinge should move.*

With them the ear is seldom in contradiction with the sense.

The third and last species of poetic harmony may be stiled the artificial, as opposed to the two first kinds; because tho' founded in nature as well as them, yet it is more particularly conspicuous in poetry, than elsewhere. This consists in a certain art, which besides the choice of expressions,

(*a*) See Vol. 4.

(*b*) *Aures, vel animus aurium nuncio, naturalem quendam in se continet vocum omnium mentionem. Itaque & longiora & breviora judicat. — Mutila sentit quondam quasi decurtata, &c. Cic. in Orat.*



and the proper adapting of the sounds to the sense, matches these with each other in such a manner, that all the syllables of a verse taken together produce by their sound, number and quantity, another species of expression, which still adds to the natural signification of the words.

Every thing in the universe has a manner of action peculiar to itself. Some movements are grave and majestic, others brisk and lively; another kind again are simple and easy. Poetry likewise has her different steps, to imitate these different movements, and convey to the ear, by a particular kind of melody, what she conveys to the mind by the help of words. It is a kind of musical song, which bears the character not only of the subject in general, but of each object in particular. This kind of harmony belongs only to poetry, and is the exact point of perfection in the versification.

On opening Homer and Virgil, we find the objects every where expressed in a musical manner. Virgil never fails of doing this; and one perceives it on reading him, at the same time one cannot absolutely tell in what it consists. In many places, indeed, it is so sensible, that it strikes the dullest ear: witness, the following lines,

Continuo ventis surgentibus, aut freta ponti  
Incipiunt agitata tumescere, & aridus altis  
Montibus audiri fragor, aut resonantia longè  
Littora misceri, & nemorum increbescere murmur.

VIRG. Georg.

When

When winds approach, the vex'd sea heaves around;  
 From the bleak mountain comes a hollow sound;  
 The loud blast that whistles o'er the echoing shore,  
 Ruffle the murmur'ing woods, the rising billows roar.

WHARTON.

And those in the Eneid, when speaking of the feeble manner in which an old man lances his spear;

*Sic fatus senior: telumque imbelles sine ictu  
 Conjecit, raucæ quod protinus ære repulsum,  
 Et summo clypei nequicquam umbone pendit.*

VIRG. Æn.

This said, his feeble hand a javelin threw,  
 Which flutt'ring, seem'd to loiter as it flew;  
 Just, and but barely, to the mark it wield,  
 And faintly tinkled on the brasen shield.

DRYDEN.

I cannot here pass by the instance of this kind we have in Horace.

*Qua pinus ingens, albaque populus  
 Umbram hospitalem confociare amant.  
 Ramis, & obliquo laborat  
 Lympha fugax trepidare rivo.*

HOR. Od. 3. Lib. 2.

Where the pale poplar and the pine,  
 Expel th'inhospitable beam,  
 In kindly shade their branches twine,  
 And toils obliquely swift the purling stream.

FRANCIS.

But if there are a set of people to whom nature has denied the satisfaction of an ear, these re-

marks

marks in no wise appertain to them. One might quote them the authorities of those authors among the Greeks and Latins, who have entered into a minute detail, with respect to this harmony of language, such as Cicero in his *Orator*, and his last book *de Orat.* and in his *Treatise of the Disposition of Words*, Quintilian, lib. 9. and Vossius, in his *Institut. Orat.* and in his *Treatise of Grammar*, but I shall content myself with referring them to the following lines from *Vida's Art of Poetry*, which afford at once the precept and example.

Haud satis est illis (poetis) utcumq; concludere versum;

Et res verborum propriâ vi reddere claras.

Omnia sed numeris vocum concordibus aptant,

Atque sono quæcunque canunt imitantur, & apta

Verborum facie, & quæsito carminis ore.

Nam diversa opus est veluti dare versibus ora

Diversosque habitus : ne qualis primus & alter,

Talis & inde alter vultuque incedat eodem.

Hic melior motuque pedum & pernicibus alis,

Molle viam tacito lapsu per levia radit.

Ille autem membris ac molle ignavius ingens

Incedit tardo molimine subsidendo.

Ecce aliquis subit egregio pulcherrimus ore,

Cui lætum membris Venus omnibus afflat honorem;

Contra alius rudis informes ostendit & artus,

Hirsutumque supercilium, & caudam sinuosam,

Ingratus visu, sonitu illætabilis ipso:

Nec vero hæc sine lege datæ, sine mente figuræ,

Sed facies sua pro meritis, habitusque sonusque

Cunctis cuique suis, vocum discrimine certo, &c.

VIDA'S ART POET. LIB. III.

Thus

*Thus Englished.*

'Tis not enough his verses to compleat  
 In measure, numbers, or determin'd feet,  
 Or render things, by clear expression, bright,  
 And set each object in a proper light.  
 To all proportion'd terms he must dispense,  
 And make the sound a picture of the sense (a);  
 The corresponding words exactly frame  
 The look, the features, and the mien the same:  
 His thoughts the bard must suitably express,  
 Each in a diff'rent face, and diff'rent dress.  
 Left in unvaried works the croud be shewn,  
 And the whole multitude appear as one.

With

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(a) Mr. Pope, in his Essay on Criticism, affords us so noble and charming an instance in our own language, of this art of making the sound a picture of the sense, that it would be wholly inexcusable to omit it in this place; especially as our author, a little farther, so magnifies this gift in his own countrymen, whom he does not scruple to rank in this respect with the best writers among the antients. Mr. Pope in the following lines has very closely imitated Vida, as will appear by comparing them with those almost immediately following the above cited by our author, and beginning, *Tum si læta canunt*, &c.

'Tis not enough, no harshness gives offence,  
 The sound must be an echo to the sense:  
 Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,  
 And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;  
 But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,  
 The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar;  
 When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,  
 The line too labours and the words move slow;  
 Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
 Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main, &c.

See Essay on Crit. p. 364. to 373.



With rapid feet and wings, without delay,  
 This swiftly flies, and smoothly skims away :  
 That, vast of size, his limbs huge, broad and strong,  
 Moves pond'rous, and scarce drags his bulk along.  
 This, blooms with youth and beauty in his face,  
 And Venus breathes on ev'ry limb a grace :  
 That, of rude form, his uncouth members shows,  
 Looks horrible, and frowns with his rough brows :  
 His monstrous tail in many a fold and wind,  
 Voluminous and vast, curls up behind :  
 At once the image and the lines appear  
 Rude to the eye, and frightful to the ear ;  
 Nor are those figures giv'n without a cause,  
 But fix'd and settled by determin'd laws,  
 All claim and wear as their deserts are known,  
 A voice, a face, and habit of their own, &c.

The remainder of this passage is equally as agreeable and instructive as the specimen here given, and furnishes us with fine examples in those rules we have advanced.

Such in general is the harmony which reigns throughout the works of the Greeks and Latins.

But is not this harmony to be met with likewise in the works of our own poets ? an established opinion prevails in favour of the antients, and wholly to the disadvantage of the moderns. Let us examine on what this is founded, and if we should find it in some measure unjust, may we not modestly assume what appears to be really our due ?

Languages are not formed upon any particular system, and as they have their source in the very nature of men, it is necessary, that they should resemble

seem each other in many respects, and that this resemblance should be extended even to the versification.

To render this position more clear, let us be allowed to resume things a little higher.

A harmony should reign throughout every discourse of what kind soever it be. If it's several parts do not agree with each other, it can never meet with a good reception. But sometimes this harmony is subject to certain fixed and positive rules; at others, it has only a few vague and indeterminate ones.

Under the first restriction, it produces what we call verse; in the second case it is prose, in which the words, sounds and phrases are determined by nature only, and the taste of the writer.

When the period begins, the ear and mind adjust and accommodate themselves to each other, so as to make the thought and expression square together, which they thus conduct in concert, to a certain common point of cadence, which terminates them at one and the same time, in the most suitable manner. Here ends the first period, to this succeeds another, which introducing a new thought, should consequently appear upon a new model too. So that harmonious or numerous prose, altho' bound by a kind of agreement of all it's parts, does nevertheless remain always free in the midst of it's chains.

It is not so with verse, every thing belonging to it being determined by fixed laws, from which there is no appeal. The measure is prepared, and must be filled with the nicest exactness, no defect, no excess, be the thought finished or not, the rule is strict and rigorously tenacious.

A verse then, whose syllables are all disposed in a regular manner; and are so either as respecting the quantity by which they are short or long, or the number by which they are more or less, and sometimes they are so in respect to both one and the other. There are some Latin verses, whose syllables are regular as to quantity and number, as the Asclepiad, and Hendecasyllable. There are others again which are so only in quantity, as the Hexameter. The French verse is regular, only as to the number of its syllables.

We know that the Latins gave the name of verse from its regular succession of the same numbers, measure, and feet, or, perhaps, because one verse being finished, they returned to the beginning of another line to write the verse following; hence, *versus*, from *vertere*, to turn, or return; so they gave this name of verses to whatever was put into a line, and by this means formed a kind of orderly arrangement of the words and syllables.

Measure, or Metre, is a certain space, containing one or several quantities. The length of the quantity is determined at will. If a quantity is the space in which one may pronounce a long

long syllable, half a quantity will be the space requisite for a short one. Of these quantities and half quantities are composed the feet of these verses, and these latter is made what is called a poem.

The principal measures that enter the composition of Greek and Latin verses, are either of two or three syllables; those of two syllables are, either both long, as the spondee marked thus — —; or both short, as the pyrrhic ∪ ∪; or one short and the other long, as the iambic — ∪; or one long and the other short, as the trochee — ∪. Those of three syllables, are the dactyl — ∪ ∪ ∪; anapest ∪ ∪ —; tribrachium ∪ ∪ ∪, or molossus — — —.

From the different combinations of these feet, and their number, the ancients formed different kinds of verses.

1. The hexameter, or heroic verse, consisting of six feet.

*Prin-ci-pi-is ob-sta, se-ro me-di-cina pa-ratur*

2. The pentameter, or that which had only five feet.

*Cum ma-la per-lo-n-gas in-valu-de moras.*

3. The iambic, of which there are three sorts, the dimeter, which has four feet, and has two rests; the trimeter, which has six; and the tetrameter, which has eight.

4. The lyric verse, or those which were sung to the lyre, such are the odes of Sappho, of Alceus, of Anacreon, and Horace. These several



kinds of verses, not only have the number of their feet assigned, but even the nature and kind of such feet.

But this was not the case, at the first rise of poetry: the number of syllables only was fixed at that time; and all the art consisted in placing a certain number of these in one line, then another number nearly equal; when the couplet, or what is the same thing, the strophe was finished, it served as a rule for the following one, provided they were to answer to each other. That this was the method, we learn from the history itself of versification.

Verses were not made at first. Singing it was that afterwards brought them in. Thus some one having sung a few words, and finding himself pleased with it, was willing to adapt the same tune to other words; now to do this he was obliged to regulate the words of the second couplet by those of the first. Thus, the first strophe of the first ode in Pindar, consisting of seventeen verses, of which some had eight syllables, others six, seven, eleven; it was necessary that the second strophe, which answered to the first, should likewise have the same number of syllables and verses, and that these should be disposed in the same order with those of the first. This was the first step to versification, which, as has been shewn before, was wholly confined to counting all the syllables of a strophe, and distributing them into certain lines called verses; for by this means, they

they found it much more easy and ready to repeat the words from verse to verse, than from strophe to strophe.

It was next observed, that the song was much easier adapted to the words, by ranking those which were long or short, in the same order in each strophe, so as to answer exactly to the same length of notes. In consequence of which, they endeavoured to assign a certain determinate length to each syllable, in making it either long or short. From this they formed what they called feet, that is, certain small spaces, exactly measured, which might be to the verse, what the verse was to the strophe; and these small parts thus framed, and more or less multiplied, they so fitted and adjusted to each other, as to form from thence the several kinds of verse abovementioned.

But these dispositions being only framed at first for the use of lyric poetry, whose couplets were to be sung to one tune, they were not so exactly followed in making the other kinds of verse.

The poets approached as near as possible to the original method, and in keeping the same length of verse, and the same number of feet, they recovered, in some degree, their former liberty of chusing long or short syllables. It is allowable to substitute at pleasure, two short, for one long, or vice versa, in the same foot; that is, a spondee for a dactyl, a dactyl for a spondee, a tribrach for an iambic, or an anapest for a dactyl; upon condition, however, that they be closely tied down

to the number of feet at the end of a verse, the cadence of which should be carefully prepared and executed. For instance, in the hexameter verse, the poet is confined as to his cadence, to the fifth and sixth foot; in the pentameter to the two last, and in the iambic especially to the last foot. And into this last form it is, that the versification of the modern languages have been chiefly thrown, particularly the French.

Our forefathers (whether instructed by nature, or the example of the latins before them) finding that the essential basis of all versification was a space divided by certain measures and times, and that the rest was almost entirely arbitrary, agreed to have this space fixed to the number of twelve, ten, eight, or seven times. The ground-work being thus prepared, it now remained to fill it up with words and syllables.

The Latin and Greek poets, who had distinguished each syllable into the length, what they called the quantity, and the sound or accent by which a syllable is either soft or harsh, grave or acute, weak or full, sonorous or flat, resolved that their versificators, though free, as to the choice of their accents, should at least be confined with respect to their length; especially in the lyric verse, and in the last feet of verses of every kind. And if they permitted them to take any liberty with the first feet of certain verses, it was upon such conditions, as left them little freedom.

Those



Those who had the forming of our versification, made the same distinction with respect to the length and sound of each syllable. But whereas the antients had directed their rules chiefly to the length of the finals, and left the choice of the accents, to the discretion of the artist; on the contrary, our ancestors giving up all the rest to the judgment of the versificator's ear, directed their rules wholly to the accents which appeared to them so much the more necessary and proper to distinguish the final rest, or pause, as rhimes being liable to be intermixed, and woven with each other in so many different manners, and subject to such a variation, not only with respect to the sounds, but the masculine and feminine syllables likewise, might at every turn, bring their contrast into play, into the very midst of consonance.

In consequence of these laws, the French versification possessed every requisite for that harmony so admired in the Greek and Latin writers.

For if this harmony consists in the exact measure and length of the verses, our Alexandrine consists of twelve times, or syllables, as well as the Hexametre of the Latins; our verses of ten syllables answer to their Pentameter. We have likewise verses of eight and seven syllables, and others which are still shorter on occasion, and which answer to the Gliconic and Adonic verse of the Greeks, and which like them are capable of being adapted to music.



If in the sound or accent of the words and syllables of which the verse is composed, we have as well as the antients our grave and accute, accents soft and harsh, sonorous and flat, simple, numerous and majestic. Besides, there is as much apparent harmony in the works of some of our prose-writers, as in any of the Greek and Latin orators and historians.

But perhaps it is in the long and short syllables which the Latins had, and we have not; that their pre-eminence in this point consists. It is true, we make almost all our syllables of equal length in common discourse; however, if one takes time to reflect, it will be found, that even supposing us to make them all short, yet some of these we shall certainly make shorter than others, and in comparison of which, the rest must be long. And it is very likely that the Latins themselves did much the same in their ordinary conversation. And if in their more studied pronunciation they took greater care in distinguishing their long and short syllables, we do it not less than they; as the Abbé d'Olivet has plainly demonstrated in his Treatise on the French Prosody. It is sufficient to read only, and be convinced of the truth of this. We have syllables of which some are long, others longer; some short, others shorter; and mute syllables, which are extremely short. Now when these are properly and judiciously blended by a good versificator, they are capable of producing, and in fact do produce the same

same effect on a heedful and practised ear, as in the Latin versification itself; the following verses may serve as examples of what has been advanced, and are such, as would, in all probability, have been looked upon by the antients as the most striking instances of the poetic harmony.

*Cadences marking the sounds imitation of the sense,*

Ses murs, dont le sommet se dérobe à la vue,  
Sur la cime d'un roc s'allongent sur la nue. . . .  
Ses ais demi pourris que l'âge a relâchés,  
Sont à coups de maillets unis & rapprochés.  
Sous les coups redoublés tous les bords s'entrechoient.  
Les murs en sont émus, les voûtes en mugissent,  
Et l'orgue même en pousse un long gémissement.

Que fais-tu, Chantre, hélas ! dans ce triste moment ?  
Tu dors d'un profond sommeil. *Boil.*

Has the admired *procumbit* of Virgil a happier cadence than this last.

Sa croupe se recourbe en replis tortueux. *Rac.*  
Un jour sur ses longs pieds alloit je ne sais où,  
Un Héron au long bec emmanché d'un long cou.  
Il cotoyait une rivière. *La Font.*

*The hurried Cadence.*  
Le Prélat & sa troupe à pas tumultueux.

Le Prélat hors du lit, impétueux s'élance. *Boil.*  
*The smooth, or flowing Cadence.*

Il est un heureux choix de sons harmonieux. *Boil.*  
Source délicieuse en misère seconde. *Cornille.*

*The harsh Cadence.*

Gardez qu'une voyelle à courir trop hâtée  
Ne soit d'une voyelle en son chemin heurtée. ...  
D'une subite horreur ses cheveux se hérissent. *Boil.*

*The slow Cadence.*

Quatre bœufs attelés d'un pas tranquille & lent  
Promenoient dans Paris le Monarque indolent.  
Traçât à pas tardifs un pénible sillon. *Boil.*

*The light Cadence.*

Tient un verre de vin qui rit dans la fougère. ...  
Il fait jaillir un feu qui pétille en sortant. ...  
Qu'à son gré désormais la fortune me joue,  
On me verra dormir au branle de sa roue. *Bel.*

It is true, this marking of cadence is not always kept up even by our best versificators; but did the Latins themselves preserve it more strictly? like us, indeed they were fond of expressing some favorite thoughts, by the choicest words their language could afford; but on all other occasions, they contented themselves with the simple and common cadence, which consists in making the verse run off smoothly, and in carefully avoiding every thing that is likely to shock a nice ear.

When we say, that versificators are fond of giving a greater degree of strength to some cadences than to others; we do not mean that they scrupulously count, weigh and measure every syllable.

"I should never suspect them of it, says Abbé

" d'Olivet

“ d’Olivet, any more than I should Homer or  
 “ Virgil, let their interpreters say what they  
 “ please; I am rather of opinion, that nature, in  
 “ forming a great poet, directs all his move-  
 “ ments by certain secret springs of her own,  
 “ rendering him docible to his art without his  
 “ knowing it; just as she teaches the labourer’s  
 “ child, unconscious of the meaning, in what  
 “ tone, to request, call, caress or complain.”

It is by this instinct, that our lyric poets  
 so advantageously employ the long or the short  
 verse in their proper places, which have the same  
 effect, nay, perhaps a happier and more certain  
 one than in the latin. The long verse has more  
 majesty, the short commonly more vivacity and  
 sweetness. Let us observe a little, the use that  
 some of the most famous lyric poets have made  
 of these: as Malherbe;

Ont-ils rendu l’esprit? ce n’est plus que poussière;  
 Que cette majesté si pompeuse & si fiere,  
 Dont l’éclat orgueilleux étonnoit l’univers;

Et dans ces grands tombeaux ou leurs ames hautaines  
 Font encore les vaines,

Ils sont mangés des vers.

And Rousseau;

Conti n’est plus: o Ciel! ses vertus, son courage,  
 La sublime valeur, le zèle pour son roi  
 N’ont pu le garantir au milieu de son âge

De la commune loi.



Il n'est plus : & les dieux en des tems si funestes  
 N'ont fait que le montrer aux regards des mortels ;  
 Soumettons-nous : allons porter ces tristes restes,

*Au pied de leurs autels.*

Elevons à sa cendre un monument célèbre,  
 Que le jour de la nuit emprunte les couleurs :  
 Soupçons, gémissons sur ce tombeau funebre,  
*Arrest de nos pleurs (a).*

Before we leave this subject, we must remember these of M. de la Mothe :

Les vers sont enfans de la lyre :  
 On doit les chanter, non les lire.  
 A peine aujourd'hui les lit-on.

Let us now enquire, how far it was an advantage to the antients, that their feet were so exactly measured and regulated for each species of verse ; since we see they are not so in the modern languages, in which the use made of dactyls and spondees is not in compliance with the law of the verse, but the taste of the ear.

It is certain, that in the verse, *Nemorum increbrescere murmur* ; it is not to the dactyl, but to the particular sound itself of the syllables that it owes its beautiful harmony. For instance, transport the dactyl to some other words : as, *quatin ungula*

---

(a) We all know how Virgil has been cried up for throwing the verb upon the beginning of the second line in these verses :

*Extinctum, nymphæ crudeli fanere, Daphniam  
 Flebant. - - -*

It is full as striking here.

*campum,*

*campum*, you no longer hear the storm. Neither is it to the short syllables being better fitted for expression than the long: for *murmur* is as expressive as *increbescere*.

Moreover, if the harmony of the verse was produced by the dactyl and the other feet, as it is certain that this harmony is no other than an agreement of sounds with the particular thought they express, (unless it is pretended, that quick and rapid sounds are proper to express a slow action) it will follow of course, that it was rather an inconvenience to the Latin poetry to be confined in the placing of its long and short syllables, and that this method was likely to be productive of at least as many faults as beauties (unless we suppose, that with them the thought could always adapt itself to the uniform pace of the versification.)

We will suppose, for example, a piece composed entirely of asclepiads, where all the syllables are measured and counted. Now if one would have the harmonic beauty, which is the result of the concord of sounds and thoughts, preserved through the whole piece, it will be necessary that the objects should be all of the same character from the beginning to end of it; for if this is wanting in any place, it will be a defect, since it is esteemed a beauty where it is found. So in these two verses of Horace, the harmony of which has been so much admired,

*Semotique prius tarda necessitas*

*Lethi corripuit gradum. Hor. ode 3. lib. 1.*

Till then slow moving to his prey,

Precipitately rapid kept his way. Francis

If *corripuit gradum* is allowed to have a very expressive harmony on account of its two dactyls, certainly *tarda necessitas* having a sense entirely contrary, by being composed likewise of two dactyls, should have a false or vicious harmony.

So sensible were the Greeks and Latins themselves of this difficulty, that in any long-winded work, they confined their rules rather to the syllables than the feet. In the hexameter, or verse of six feet, four of these are free. From which liberty this kind of verse derives what beauty it has on the side of its long or short syllables, and perhaps the constraint laid on the fifth and sixth feet, might be no other than an arbitrary beauty, a kind of *rhyme in quantity*, answering to the *rhyme of sounds* in our French verse. Whence it follows, that things being much the same in their hexameter and our Alexandrine, therefore as to the Lyric verse, the Greeks and Latins appear to have had rather less advantage than ourselves.

There is yet another inconvenience attending the versification of the antients, which is, that with them, the times are so absolutely filled by the syllables, that there remains no space for placing

cing the pauses or cesura's necessary to every discourse, and which we generally distinguish by the comma, or the full stop. Whereas these pauses should, if any thing, be more nicely observed in versification, than even the minims and rests in a piece of music. Now the Greeks and Latins found themselves obliged, either to omit the pause entirely, which greatly confined the pronunciation, and often did violence to the sense, or if they did not, they necessarily interrupted the measure, and destroyed the movement of their verse. In the French versification, these pauses, when managed by a delicate ear, which is always in concert with the sense, are found placed in that particular measure they precede or follow, and so far from breaking in upon the movement, that they, on the contrary, serve to vary the harmony at the same time that they greatly ease the attention. If the pauses appear too long, they are then placed at the end of the verse, and by that means form an entire measure, which does not interfere with the movement of the following verse; so that from the choice and combination of the long and short syllables, by the ear, and by such a distribution of the pauses, as the sense appears to require, without hurting the measures, our verse must have a much more regular movement than either those of the Greeks or Latins. This we plainly experience in reading the French verse, and it is very easy to convince the most ignorant ear of it, if only in the two following verses:



Il ouvre un large bec, laisse tomber sa proie  
Le Renard s'en saisit, & dit.

LA FONT.

The third measure of the first line, which should properly make two lines, not being to be filled by the last syllable of the word *large*, which is very short, nor by that of the word *bec*, which is no less so, the pause which follows, and is denoted by the comma, fills the space that remains, and at once satisfies the ear and mind. So in the following line these two words, *et dit*, which make two very short syllables, and are placed between two pauses, take that which immediately follows them to render their measure compleat, and leave the preceding one to the word *saisit*, which adopts it to fill up the space in its own. And this ought to be the method observed in all well-made verses.

Now from the whole of what has been said on the Greek and Latin versification, as well as that of the French, we may draw the following conclusions:

I. That as in their Lyric verses, which were divided into couplets set to the same tune, the antients had an artificial rule, which, by determining the place of the long and short syllables, contributed greatly to the beauty of their song; so likewise should those of our poets, which form couplets to be sung, at least follow the natural rule of the ear, in placing the long and short syllables

syllables in such a manner as best to suit the tune.

2. That in such of these verses as are not divided into couplets, the musician and the poet should mutually adjust the different syllables so, as to enjoy in its full force the superior advantage they have over the Latins, in not being tied down to the feet of any particular kind of verse, which necessarily subjected the music of these latter to an unpleasing sameness.

3. That whereas in those verses not intended to be set to music, our language affords the poets sounds of all kinds and syllables more or less long or short, and some which are very short, having likewise the same movements and times with the Latin verse, joined to the advantage of finals, and besides all this, having yet another advantage peculiar to themselves, viz. that of being able to introduce most part of the rests in pronunciation, into the measure; all these considered, I think our verses should be full as beautiful and pleasing as those of the Latin poets.

But this last consequence will, I am afraid, appear a kind of paradox, else why do we not perceive that harmony in them, which we do in those of the Latins?

May I be permitted to offer a reason for this, which may in some sort serve to justify us? The ear has its prejudices as well as the mind; and if this comes to be never so little assisted by habitude

tude or custom, the error acquires as much credit as a demonstrated truth.

There is a sort of mechanism in the verification of the antients, to which the ear is accustomed ; and this consists, not only in having the same space to run over, but in the same continued pace, the same equal return of short and long syllables, which may be compared to the burthen of a song, which, when we have once learnt, appears more natural to us than the nicest melody, which is heard but once, and never returns again. For instance, when we have heard five or six asclepiad verses gallopping over the same dactyls, we are so accustomed to this pace, that our ear takes the lead, and strikes itself the same sounds, whether short or long, which it has thus retained. And this habit, it is that makes the Greek and Latin verses appear so musical to us ; and as we have not the same for our own, which may return a thousand times, without bringing the same sounds twice to the ear, nor the same quantity of syllables ; for this reason the most beautiful French verses will be felt by us, no otherwise than as a fine air which we hear for the first time. When our preceptors first attempted to give us an idea of the harmony of verses, they began by causing us to distinguish the feet, and then set us to scan (the following line suppose :)

*Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum,*

And

And to make us the better perceive the beauty of the cadence, it was compared with some such as the following :

*Olli inter sese magna vi brachia tollunt.*

From hence we were made to comprehend, that verses were more or less harmonious, according as they approached more or less to that musical character, which is so connected with the object of the thought. We were suffered to imagine, that this beauty arose rather from the dactyls and spondees, than the length or shortness of the syllables, or the sound of the words, syllables and letters. After some time, when we came to enter into our own poets, unprepared by any reflection on the laws of our grammar, or the genius of our language, meeting no longer with dactyls or spondees, and having no notion of the long or short syllables ; no wonder if we did not, nor do as yet make the proper account of our own wealth, but so much esteem and prefer that of foreigners, by which we have been wholly nourished and occupied from our tender years.

Such ideas as these might be permitted in the times when literature was but just reviving, and the French language was as yet rude and unformed ; but now that it is become the most polite and elegant in the world, and has produced such master-pieces in every species of productions, the foregoing question at least merits an examination ; for it would be double injustice to decide

in



in the negative, without having first maturely weighed the subject.

However, we do not flatter ourselves so far as to think, that what we have here advanced should be without its difficulties for many; we would only assure such, that if they will give themselves the trouble of attending to what has been said, it will turn out to the advantage and glory of a language, which we ought to love and cherish, seeing it is at this day the delight of other nations.

#### CHAPTER V.

Of the English versification, extracted from Mr. Byshe and Mr. Johnson.

**T**HE history of versification in general, as treated by the author in the foregoing detail, agrees in many particulars equally with either language, the French or English; but as in the application and rules he seems to have had an eye wholly to the French poetry, and the comparison between it and that of the ancients, I judged it could not be unacceptable to the English student to find a separate article, dedicated in a more particular manner to that of his own language.

The structure of our verses consists, like that of the French, in a certain number of syllables, not in feet composed of long and short syllables, as the verses of the Greeks and Latins. And though

though some ingenious persons puzzled themselves in prescribing rules for the quantity of English syllables, and in imitation of the Latins composed vessels by the measure of spondees, dactyls, &c. yet the success of their undertaking has fully evinced the vainness of the attempt, and given ground to suspect, they had not thoroughly weighed what the genius of our language would bear; nor reflected that each tongue has it's peculiar beauties, and what is agreeable and natural to one is often disagreeable, nay inconsistent with another.

In our English verse, there are two principal things to be considered: 1. The seat of the accent. 2. The pause. For it is not enough that verses have their just number of syllables, the true harmony of them depends on a due observation of the accents and pause.

By the accent (*a*) is understood an elevation or falling of the voice, on a certain syllable of a word.

The pause, or rest (*b*) is a stop made in pronouncing the verse, and that divides it as it were into two parts, each of which is called an hemistich, or half-verse; as for example:

(*a*) *Ton de voix* of the French.

(*b*) *Repos* of the French.

Vide Chap. 4.

Like bright Aurora, whose refulgent ray  
Foretels the fervor of the ensuing day.

WALL:

But we are not confined in our verse to a scrupulous exactness in this division, that is to say, one of the half-verses does not always contain the same number of syllables as the other: and this inequality proceeds from the seat of the accent, that is, strongest and prevails most in the first of the hemistich; for the pause must be observed at the end of the word where such accents happen to be, or at the end of the following word, it will appear by the examples towards the end of this article.

The feet of our verses are either iambic, as *aloft, create*, or trochaic, as *holy, lofty*.

The iambic measure comprises verses of four, six, eight and ten syllables, in all which the accents are to be placed on even syllables, otherwise the verse will be rough and disagreeable, and every line considered by itself is more harmonious, as this rule is more strictly observed, as appears in the following examples in the verse:

Of four syllables:

With ravish'd ears,

The monarch hears:

Assumes the god,

Affects to nod.

DRYD.

Of six:

Firm'd with a purple grace

He shows his honest face.

Alòft, in awful ftate,

The godlike hero fàte.

Idem.

Of eight; which is the usual measure of short poems:

And may at laft my weary age

Find out the peaceful hermitage,

The hairy gown and mossy cell,

Where I may fit, and nightly fleep;

Of ev'ry ftar, the fky does fhew,

And ev'ry herb that fips the dew.

MILTON.

Of ten; which is the common measure of heroic and tragic poetry:

Full in the midft of this created fpace,

Betwixt heav'n, earth and fkiës, there ftands a place,

Confining on all three; with triple bound,

Whence all tho' remote are view'd around,

And thither bring their undulating found.

The palace of loud fame, her feat of pow'r,

Play'd on the fummit of a lofty tow'r.

A thoufand winding entries long and wide,

Receive of frefh reports a flowing tide.

DRYDEN.

Our



Our trochaic measure consists of verses of three, five and seven syllables, and here the accent is to be placed on the odd syllables:

Verses of three syllables

Here we may

Think and pray

Before death

Stops our breath:

Other joys

Are but toys

Of five:

In the days of old

Lovers felt annoy

Of seven:

Fairest piece of well form'd earth,

Urge not thus your haughty birth:

Beauties ever fair and young,

Drinking joys did first ordain,

Bacchus's blessings are a treasure,

Drinking is the soldier's pleasure

DRYDEN.

These are the measures which are now chiefly in use, and above the rest those of seven, eight and ten syllables. There are some pieces wrote by

by our ancient poets in verses of twelve syllables, as Drayton's Polyolbion. Here the accent is on the sixth syllable:

Of all the Cambrian shires their heads that bear so high,  
And far survey their soils with an ambitious eye,  
Mervinia for her hills, as for their matchless crowds,  
The nearest that are said to kiss the wand'ring clouds,  
Especial audience craves, offended with the throng  
That she of all the rest neglected was so long.

DRAYTON.

We have another measure very quick and five-  
And of fourteen as Chapman's Homer:

And as the mind of such a man, that hath a long  
way gone,  
And either knoweth not his way, or else would let  
alone  
His purpos'd journey is distract.

CHAPMAN.

The verse of twelve syllables called an Alexandrine, is now used only to diversify heroic lines, but when rightly used carries a peculiar grace. As for example:

Waller was smooth, but Dryden taught to join;  
The varying verse, the full resounding line,  
The long majestic march, and energy divine.

Pope.

The pause in the Alexandrine must be at the sixth syllable.

The

The verse of fourteen syllables is now broken into a soft lyric measure of verses, consisting alternately of eight syllables and six:

She to receive thy radiant name  
 Selects a whiter space:  
 When all shall praise and every lay  
 Devote a wreath to thee  
 That day, for come it will, that day  
 Shall I lament to see.

We have another measure very quick and lively, and therefore much used in songs, which may be called the anapestick, in which the accent rests upon every third syllable.

May I govern my passions with absolute sway,  
 And grow wiser and better as life wears away.

In this measure a syllable is often retrenched from the first foot; as,

Diógenes surly and proud.  
 I think not of Iris nor Iris of me.

To these measures and their laws may be reduced every species of English verse.

From the foregoing examples it appears, that the pause in all our English verses is determined by the seat of the accent; but if the accents happen to be equally strong on the second, fourth and sixth syllable of a verse, then the sense and construction of the words must guide the

the observation of the pause: for example, in one of the verses cited above,

Receive of fresh reports a flowing tide.

The accent is as strong on *fresh* as on the last syllable of *reports*; and if the pause was observed at the fourth syllable, it would have nothing disagreeable in the sound; as,

A thousand winding entries long and wide,

Receive of fresh . . . reports a flowing tide.

Which though it is no violence to the ear, yet it is to the sense, and that ought always carefully to be avoided in reading or repeating verse.

In short, the wrong placing the accent is as great a fault in our versification, as false quantity was in that of the antients, and therefore we ought to take care to avoid it, and endeavour so to dispose the words, that they may create a certain melody in the ear, without labor to the tongue, or violence to the sense.

The works of our celebrated English poets furnish us with innumerable instances of this pleasing harmony in the verse, the following are selected as proofs of our being at least equal in this respect to any of the moderns; and we are perhaps excelled by few if any among the antients.

#### REMARKABLE CADENCES.

##### *The full or strong Cadence.*

Oh! could I flow like thee, and make thy stream,  
My great example, as it is my theme;

VOL. I.

H

Tho'



Tho' dark, yet clear, tho' gentle, yet not dull,  
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full (a).

DENHAM.

*The swift cadence.*

Light as the light'ning's glimpse, they ran, they flew (b).

MILT. Par. Lost, book vi.

It is surprising, that no one has as yet taken notice of this line in Milton, which is the finest instance that our language produces, of making the sound a picture to the sense; I defy the most careless or injudicious reader not to feel the effects of it, or from being hurried away by the rapidity of the verse. It is wonderful, that Mr Newton, in his Commentaries on this poet, should have overlooked this line, especially as he has specified, and very justly, one that follows it very closely in the same passage, and finely expresses the dread and astonishment struck into the apostate angels, at seeing the whole host of heaven moving towards them with upheaved mountains in their arms, ready to overwhelm them; and may serve in this place as an instance of

(a) Compare this with the French cadences in the preceeding chapter, beginning, *Set murs*, &c.

(b) *Le Prelat hors du lit*, &c. *ibid*,

*The slow cadence.*

Amaze and terror seiz'd the rebel host,  
 When coming towards them, so dread they saw  
 The bottoms of the mountains upwards turn'd (c).

Ibid.

*The smooth or flowing cadence.*

But oh no pen can trace,  
 No words can shew the beauties of his face ;  
 So kind, so winning ! so divinely fair,  
 Eternal youth and pleasure, flourish there :  
 Here all the little loves and graces meet,  
 And every thing that's soft, and ev'ry thing that's  
 sweet (d).

Dr LISLE's Persenna.

*The rough and harsh cadence.*

But when loud surges lash the sounding shoar,  
 The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar.

POPE.

The god grew terrible again, and was again a-  
 dored (e).

Rowe's Tamerlane.

(c) *Quatre bœufs attelés*, Ibid.(d) *Il est un beureux choix*, &c. Ibid.(e) *Sa croupe se recourbe*, &c. Ibid.

*Tho light or sprightly cadence.*

Honour's but an empty bubble,  
Never ending, still beginning;  
Fighting still, and still destroying,  
If the world be worth thy winning,  
Think, oh think it worth enjoying!  
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,  
Take the good the gods provide thee (f).

DRYD.

Our versification admits of few licences except a *synalepha* or elision of *e* in *the* before a vowel, as *th'eternal*; and more rarely of *e* in *to*, as *t'accept*; and a *synæresis*, by which two short vowels coalesce into one syllable, as *question*, *special*; or a word is contracted by the expulsion of a short vowel before a liquid, as *ov'rice*, *temp'rance*.

Now, in a proper use of these licences, and in a masterly combination of the several measures of English verse, consists the merit of any poetical performance; and constitute the exact point of perfection in the harmony of the verse.

Before we put an end to this chapter, we shall, in conformity with our author in the preceding one, present our readers with an example of the manner in which one of our lyric poets have availed themselves of the variety of measures in the English verse. This is Mr Dryden, who, in his

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(f) *Tient un verre du vin*, &c. See the preceding chapter.

incomparable ode, called Alexander's Feast, by endeavouring to shew the power of music, has exhausted all the rules and beauties of versification. This ode will serve as the best comment on the foregoing rules, as it at once furnishes the precept and example.

Timotheus, plac'd on high  
 Amid the tuneful choir,  
 With flying fingers touch'd the lyre;  
 The trembling notes ascend the sky,  
 And heav'nly joy inspire:  
 The song began from Jove,  
 Who left his blissful seats above;  
 (Such is the pow'r of mighty love!)

A dragon's fiery form bely'd the god:  
 Sublime on radiant spires he rode;  
 When he to fair Olympia press'd;  
 And while he sought her snowy breast,  
 Then round her slender waste he curl'd,  
 And stamp'd an image of himself, a sov'reign of the  
 world;

• • • • •

Sooth'd with the sound, the king grew vain,  
 Fought all his battles o'er again,  
 And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew  
 the slain.

The master saw the madness rise,  
 His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;  
 And while he heav'n and earth defy'd,  
 Chang'd his hand, and check'd his pride:  
 He chose a mournful muse,  
 Soft pity to infuse:



He sung Darius great and good,  
 By too severe a fate,  
 Fall'n, fall'n, fall'n, fall'n,  
 Fall'n from his high estate,  
 And welt'ring in his blood;  
 Deserted, at his utmost need,  
 By those his former bounty fed:  
 On the bare earth expos'd he lies,  
 With not a friend to close his eyes.

With down-cast looks the joyless victor fate,

Revolving in his alter'd soul

The various turns of chance below :

And now and then a sigh he stole,

And tears began to flow (a).

The mighty master smil'd to see

That love was in the next degree ;

'Twas but a kindred sound to move,

For pity melts the soul to love.

Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,

Soon he sooth'd his soul to pleasures ;

War, he sung, is toil and trouble,

Honour but an empty bubble ;

Never ending, still beginning ;

Fighting still, and still destroying ;

If the world be worth thy winning,

Think, O think it worth enjoying !

Lovely Thais sits beside thee ;

Take the good the gods provide thee.

• • • • •

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,

Gaz'd on the fair,

Who caus'd his care,

---

(a) Compare this with the verses of Malherbe and Rousseau in the foregoing chapter.

And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,  
 Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again.  
 At length with wine and love at once oppress'd,  
 The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.  
 Now strike the golden lyre again,  
 A louder yet, and yet a louder strain;  
 Break his bands of sleep afunder,  
 And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.

The king seiz'd a flambeau, with zeal to destroy:

Thais led the way,  
 To light him to his prey;  
 And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy.

Thus long ago,  
 E'er heaving bellows learn'd to blow,  
 While organs yet were mute,  
 Timotheus to his breathing flute,  
 And sounding lyre,  
 Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.

DRYDEN.

On comparing what has been said in this chapter relating to the English versification, with what has been advanced by the author in the preceding one concerning that of his own country the reader will find a stronger and more lively parallel between the two languages than any thing we could have offered on the head: and the judicious and unprejudiced observer will readily determine on which side the advantage lies.

## CHAPTER VI.

In what the poetry of the verse consists.

**W**HAT gives occasion to this proposition is the seeing verses, which, with the requisite measure and number of feet, the true poetic turns and images, besides a grandeur, force, grace and elevation of stile, yet want that taste, that true relish, which is only to be found in what is really verse: this we perceive in the French poetry more particularly; let rhymes and a measure be applied to the prose (so wholly poetical) of Telemachus, yet shall we not be able to make verse of it. The prosaic strain will break through all the attire of poetry.

What is still more, a verse of Moliere is verse with him, but would be prose in Corneille; that of Corneille, which is verse in the drama, would cease to be so in the epic. Quinault would be pure prose were it not made to be set to music. He writes in the lyric stile, his verses are therefore poetic; because they are tuneful. Whence arises this difference, is it founded on any principle? I should imagine it was; But what is this principle? If it is a just one, it should equally extend to every kind of verse without exception; as it is to contain the intrinsic and essential difference between verse and prose.

Father du Cerceau asserts this principle to be inversion. The *vis poetica*, according to him, consisting in suspension. Now inversion begets suspension,

sion, therefore must inversion be in the *vis poetica*, and consequently the characteristic difference between verse and prose.

But Father du Cerceau never reflected, that this principle of his was to extend farther than the French poetry; the Latins had prosaic verses as well as us, were they only those of Cicero; but why were they prose? Certainly not for want of having their inversions; for, according to the father, they would not have been affected by these, the order of the words being a thing of indifference.

The suspension of the sense is certainly a great beauty in verse. It is likewise true, that this is often occasioned by the transposition of the words; but it is very extraordinary, that F. du Cerceau should not perceive that this suspension agrees as well with prose as verse. It is one of the fundamental rules in eloquence, first, to present such objects to the mind as are capable of interesting and attaching it; then to make it wait a-while in expectation of the particular word which is to satisfy it, and terminate the sense of the period. And indeed every one follows this as a kind of natural rule, who has a sufficient freedom of elocution to enable him to express ideas in such an order, as is most likely to interest and attach the hearer.

Besides, the *poetic* inversions, of which P. du Cerceau speaks, are the most plain of any, consisting merely in the displacing of any two ideas,



by putting the case governed before the governing verb; which begets a much less degree of suspension than the inversions in oratory, where whole phrases are transposed: and, indeed, it is rather the arrangement of things, than words, that constitutes true suspension in every work of eloquence; these are disposed in such a manner that the first introducing the rest, do either excite our imagination by their singularity, or our heart, by the relation they appear to have with its interests, so as not to permit us to continue indifferent to what is to follow.

Lastly, if inversion and suspension constitute the essence of verse, then, wherever one or other of these are wanting it is no longer verse; but if this was the case, three parts in four of the verses of our best poets must be erased; for in those of them which abound the most with inversions, in twenty lines there shall not be perhaps twelve with this pretended essential character.

The method by which Father du Cerceau proves his thesis is far from being exact.

He takes the first lines of *Telemachus*; to these he adapts measures, an hemistich, and rhyme. By this operation he forms a verse, but such verses as are really prose. He next throws in some inversions, by which the verses are rendered more poetical than they were before; and from hence concludes, that all verses become poetic by means of inversion. He might indeed with justice have concluded, that verse is sometimes  
made

made more poetical by inversion. This consequence would have been natural and true; but then it would no longer have contained the thesis to be proved. The conclusion of the particular from the general is a sophism, when it is not in an essential matter; now so very little essential is inversion to poetry, that by far the greatest number of verses are quite destitute of it.

But, says Father du Cerceau, "these are not absolute verses, they are only negatively so." But what can he mean by what follows? "That is to say, that to make good verses in a complete manner, there is nothing wanting but a few inversions. I do not deny, but that, independent of this assistance, they may still have their beauty, be capable of pleasing us, and even seem to be thoroughly perfect; but when we come to examine them a little more strictly, we shall always have this to condemn in them, that however beautiful or elegant they appear, the whole of the advantage they claim over prose is derived merely from the cesura, the rhyme, &c." Now is not this saying, that inversion is necessary, because it is necessary? Corneille, Racine, Despreaux, La Fontaine, Quinault, Madame Deshoulieres, have each composed a thousand verses which are the most agreeable and pleasing both to the ear and taste; yet if we examine these narrowly, we shall find, that they want the inversion perhaps; and therefore have not the true character of verse.

According to this system of our reverend father's; if we suppose an epic poem, of ten thousand verses with inversions in each verse, the author of such a performance must have executed wonders. F. du Cerceau must himself have been obliged to acknowledge this, and admire such a work from one end to the other. But I greatly fear he would be the only one that did. I much question, whether the imagination would be contented with a continual train of inversions, every moment interrupting it in its accustomed pace. We like exercise, but are still better pleased with indolence; very often we admit of being roused, only to be convinced that we exist; and if this is carried so far, as to put us upon exerting any effort; that effort once over, which is a kind of proof of our perfection, we are then glad to sink into rest. And this is the source, reason, and rule of all inversions. The mind keeping still the same pace, is as it were lulled and rocked to sleep by uniformity, or a continuance of the same objects. To rouse it from this state of security, and to awaken its faculties, a few slight obstacles are now and then thrown in, which excites its attention, and causes it to vary its motions. But if it is made to labor through rugged and unequal paths, exercise in that case becomes a fatigue, and we must quit the road. For this reason are the greatest part of our old obsolete writers quite laid aside.

It appears then, that inversion is nothing more than a kind of salt in the poetic style, which is now and then to be sprinkled with discretion; to keep up the attention, and prevent the mind from being cloyed with its repast; but still is it not in all cases able to give that zest which constitutes what we call a good verse, a verse well turned. But what will it do then? Here we recur to the principle we have already established, which, if just and true, should be every where equally applicable and conformable.

*Poetry is the imitation of elegant nature expressed by a measured discourse.* In this imitation are at once included gods, kings, the simple citizen in his village, the shepherd in his field; and even the brute creation, as supposed discoursing with each other, or with mankind; poetry then must make these gods, kings, &c. speak and discourse in the manner they really and naturally do. This is the object of imitation. But as this is not a servile imitation of simple and common nature, but of nature selected, embellished and improved as much as possible; poetry, therefore, is not only to make its men and gods speak, as they *commonly* speak, but as they *should* speak, supposing each in his highest degree of perfection. Hence it follows, that the prosaic strain is that of nature such as she *is*; the poetic strain that of nature such as she *should be*, i. e. of elegant nature.

Let us now demonstrate this principle by application. Poetry has in all times been said to be  
the



the language of the gods. But as the gods discourse of every thing, and that they must speak in the stile of gods, therefore we should employ on this occasion a kind of middle strain, formed from a consideration of the quality of the speakers, and that of the object of which they speak; this should be somewhat higher than what belongs to the object spoken of, and somewhat lower than that of the person who speaks. But here we will drop the allegory.

Every poet, when he first begins to compose, raises his imagination in such a manner, that it may represent objects to him, in a degree of perfection above vulgar nature. Inspired by the presence of these objects, strongly imprinted on his mind, his style necessarily takes a dye above that of nature, and this dye is that of poetry, which constitutes the character of the verse in all languages. This now is what we call the *poetry of the verse*. To give a precise definition of which, we shall say, that a verse is poetic where it has some kind of ornament, be it of whatsoever nature; and when the measured expression has a certain elevation, force, and grace in the words, turns and numbers, which is not to be met with in the same subject when treated by prose; in a word, when it shews us nature ennobled, enriched, decorated, and exalted above herself. Every one will allow, that there are several different tones or strains, at least in the different kinds of writing. Now the tone proper to each  
kind

kind has other degrees of tones, which constitute the tones of the particular species, and in these species themselves, there are still subdivisions for each subject in particular. The utmost possible perfection then, of the tone peculiar to each kind, and of the subject in each kind, is what makes *the poetry of the verse*.

Now, if we apply this principle to every genius of poetry, and even to all the known languages, we shall find it constantly give the color and resemblance of poetry even to works of prose.

Prose has its words, turns and harmony; poetry has all these, but in a much more perfect degree, whenever she can make them so. In the Greek language she coined new words, and changed, transposed, extended or confined the signification of those already in use; she even went so far as to say,

Mortals say so, but thus speak the gods.

With the Latins, despising the order and pace of prose, she borrows foreign turns, and forms a kind of singular composition of things common in themselves, to raise herself above the vulgar strain. In both one and the other languages she forges herself chains, in the midst of which it is her pride and glory to preserve such a freedom and unconstraint, that her works rather bespeak the immediate power of a deity, than the efforts of a simple mortal.

In

In fine, it is with a view to raise herself to this sphere, so much above humanity, that in the French language she sometimes subjects herself to a certain symmetry, and concerted harmony between the ear and the mind; at others making use of words wholly her own, despising constructions, &c. There is nothing she dreads so much as being merely natural; natural she would be indeed, but in a manner superior to nature.

History sets to view the revolutions in human affairs; wherein we behold real manners, virtues and vices with talents, often in themselves only middling and indifferent; simple history is a narration, timid in the presence of truth, a recital of facts expressed in the plainest manner, and which fears nothing so much as the pomp of words. The epopoiea, on the other hand, seizes the pencil of Homer, and at one view takes in the whole universe. A god discovers to the poet in one instant, heaven, hell, and earth, the past, the present, and the future. Who chuses at will, and draws up an history of mankind, rather than of men. The ethic ascends even to the mysteries of divine providence, and shews us at once the *moving forces*, their direction; and the effects they have produced. Here every thing should be uttered with a degree of nobleness and dignity superior to its natural condition, men should speak in the stile of heroes, the passions should all have an energy, a continued vigor; in short, all should be nature, but nature enchanted and transported

transported by the enthusiastic raptures of the muse. There is not a single verse in the *Æneid*, which does not partake of the dignity of the muse invoked by the poet in the beginning of his work, and to this dignity they owe their poetic strain; without this they might be verses indeed in another species of writing, but would be prose in the epopoiea.

But how can poetry make the gods speak better than they speak already? The gods do not speak at all, or if they do speak, it is in the same manner as men. Therefore the business will be to make them speak in such a manner, as we would suppose men to do in whom the highest degree of power and wisdom were at once conjoined. Then we should have a language in the true poetic strain of the deity.

There are kings who speak with great dignity a just turn of thought regulates all their words, which succeed without crowding each other, and present an image of a truly noble soul.

But what king speaks like Augustus in *Cornéille*?

*Prens un siège, Cinna, prens, & sur toute chose*

*Observe exactement la loi que je t'impose :*

*Prete, sans me troubler, l'oreille a mes discours ;*

*D'aucun mot, d'aucun cri n'en interromps le cours,*

*Tiens ta langue captive ; & si ce grande silence*

*A ton émotion fait quelque violence,*

*Tu pourras me répondre après tout à loisir,*

Tu



Tu vois le jour, Cinna ; mais ceux dont tu le tiens  
Furent les ennemis de mon pere & les miens, &c.

Thus englished :

Cinnâ ! draw near, nay nearer yet, and mark  
With strict observance what I now enjoin thee ;  
Let mute attention, firmly seal thy lips :  
Let not a word escape thee ; not a sound  
To interrupt the current of my speech ;  
But solemn and retentive silence hold  
Thy tongue a captive. Should this long forbearance  
Grow irksome to thee ; shouldst thou pant for utterance ;  
In a more fitting moment thou may'st answer,  
And at thy fuller leisure frame reply.  
Cinna thou liv'st, yet those to whom thou ow'st  
That life, were ever the avowed foes  
Of my great father and myself, &c.

What prince ever spoke with such a degree of majesty ? Or allowing him to have had the same tone of voice, would he had such a richness of expression, so full, so harmonious ? There is a natural sublimity in the language of princes ; but then, as it is less the effects of plain than elegant nature, they have a fundamental poetic strain, which, when expressed in a noble and grand manner, has all the requisites of real verse.

We are not to form our ideas of nature in a rigorous and logical sense. Nature is whatever is done according to the common laws of things. When once it passes that limit, though it may still be nature, it has no longer that name, but approaches

approaches to the marvellous, and in consequence becomes possessed of that poetic elevation which begets admiration and surprize.

Tragedy has, as well as the epopoiea, its different personages, interests, passions and situations. And these must all appear with an additional degree of dignity to render them worthy of the buskin, otherwise they would be either prose or comic verses; which latter cost much less pains in the composition than those of tragedy.

Les hommes la plupart sont etrangement faits

Dans la jûste nature on ne les voit jamais. . . .

Et la plus noble chose ils la gâtent souvent

Pour la vouloir outrer, ou passer trop avant.

BOIL.

Thus englished :

For a strange race in general are mankind,

Seldom to nature's simple rules confin'd;

But fond, or to extend, or pass her bound,

The noblest things thro' mere excess confound.

This detail is applicable of itself to the eclogue, the fable, the epistle in verse, the satire, and the epigram. For every one of these productions, when they are truly poetic, have a certain air of preparation, or care which shews itself, and tells us we are to expect an entertainment; and all such verses as want this distinguishing badge of the muses, are not to be esteemed as such, but simply prose.

From

From hence it follows, that if we were to take the finest verses of Moliere, and make use of them in productions of a superior genius, that air of familiarity so inseparable from them would give them the appearance of prose. Or were those of Corneille to be brought down to productions of a lower class, they would draw every one's attention on them. What do they here? We should say; this is certainly not their place! A writer happy in a just and delicate taste, always lowers or heightens his shades, according to the nature and exigence of his verse.

But how subtle must the taste be, which is capable of touching the shades with the light and elegant hand of Madame Deshoulieres, whose works have every requisite of prose, nay which even seem to be prose itself; and yet in these very places have wherewithal to give them the true character of poetry; but this is so nice and delicate, that it may be compared to that indivisible instant, of which La Fontaine speaks:

Lorsque, n'étant plus nuit, il n'est pas encore jour.

Where it's no longer night, yet scarce is day.

Witness the following verses:

L'ambition, l'honneur, l'intérêt, l'imposture,  
Qui font tant de maux parmi nous,  
Ne se rencontrent point chez vous.

Cependant

Cependant nous avons la raison pour partage,

Et vous en ignorez l'usage.

Innocens animaux, n'en soyés point jaloux,

Ce n'est pas un grand avantage.

Father du Cerceau would be considerably at a loss if he was to apply his favourite principle here. He would certainly make negative verses of them. But I think nothing can be easier, than to shew how these are properly what is called verse. This little extract is neither in the epic, tragic, comic, nor pastoral strain. In either of these kinds the verse would be more or less prose. But here it is not the least so, because there is something above what simple nature would inspire a person with in the situation in which Madame Deshoulières is supposed to be. She sees a flock of sheep feeding; she compares their condition with our's; she gives herself up to a gentle *reverie* mixed with concern; she scarcely thinks; she only feels, and her sentiments expresses itself almost of its own accord, in the softest and most soothing manner; yet notwithstanding this apparent indolence, nothing appears superfluous or mean. Nature of herself could not complain in so good terms. There is something here then more than we commonly see in nature, and this something it is, that constitutes the poetic strain of the piece. Had Madame Deshoulières wrote these very thoughts in prose to her daughter, and on the same subject; Would she have made use of the apostrophe in her letter, or continued it through  
ten



ten lines? If she had, she would have transgressed the epistolary stile; consequently this piece has a different stile from that of a letter.

From this principle we may deduce the reason of the differences we remark between the stile of prose and that of poetry, and what gives birth to all the inversions. In prose the verb is put before the case governed, in poetry the reverse always takes place. If the active voice is most frequent in prose, poetry disdaining it adopts the passive; she is prodigal of her epithets, which prose makes use of only on certain occasions, and that sparingly; and she places them before the substantive where prose puts them after, and after where prose puts them before. Poetry employs singular for plural, and plural for singular. She never calls men nor things by their proper names, with her it is the son of Peleus, the shepherd of Sicily, the swan of Dirce. With her, the year is the great circle, which is compleated by a revolution of months. She renders the ideas more concise, deepens her colours, and suffers nothing about her of mean or common, every thing is rich, every thing is full. Her way is strewed with golden sands, or covered with the choicest flowers. She takes a part for the whole, and the whole for a part. She invests spiritual substances with a corporeal form, gives life to the lifeless; and, as if she was ashamed of being within the ken of vulgar minds, envelops herself with the clouds of allegory, recounts things but by halves,

throws

throws forth her strokes of erudition in a hasty manner, and gives transient touches of places, events and times, taking it always for granted, that those who hear her are fully capable of comprehending her meaning. In fine, it is for this reason, that she even ventures to borrow foreign turns to make herself more remarkable, and raise herself above the common level. She describes such circumstances as prose passes over, and sometimes even piques herself upon giving them very minutely and carefully; in all which she has but one end in view, that of raising herself above the strain which is natural to the particular species in which the poetical performance is made; and any one of all these several means is alone sufficient to prevent the verse from becoming prose.

In arts, as well as in nature, all things are subsequent and dependent on each other. It is to make a more elegant and splendid appearance that poetry is curious in her choice of objects, and improving and raising them above themselves; and for that reason, raises her stile by the same judicious choice in the words, turns and constructions. Therefore in repeating or reading verse we should do it in a different tone to prose. There is a poetic pronunciation, which is a kind of song or air, more or less strong, according to the particular species of the verse. Verses of the epic, tragic, and lyric kind are to be read with one tone of voice; those of the comic, satyric and epistolary kind with another. These last  
require

require almost a familiar tone, yet not entirely so, or they would be badly repeated; for they must always retain something of a spirit, which may demonstrate them to belong to the language of the gods. The difference between the tone of pronunciation in the different kinds of verse, should be the same as that in the different tone of stile; and as this has either a whole tone or semi-tone above the simple natural, the pronunciation of him who reads or repeats should be raised in proportion.

The same rule holds good with respect to gestures in action. The theatrical gesture is distinguished from that made use of in common conversation, or in the discourse of the orator. These are prosaic (if I may use the term) those poetic, that is to say, they have a degree of perfection and energy, which they want when joined to prose. A theatrical gesture in the pulpit would appear affected and ridiculous, the business there not being to *please* only, but to present nature to us such as she is; and provided she is easy and free from deformity we are contented; whereas the study of the other is to give us the *beautiful*, and for that purpose requires that every thing about it should be in a more than ordinary degree of perfection. This is its law, of the justice of which we are all sensible, and therefore require that it should be well executed, and with exactness, otherwise we have not what we expected, and what indeed we had a right to expect.

So

So that gesture, tone of voice, stile, things, all should be natural in poetry, otherwise it would bear no resemblance to any thing; but, at the same time, they should be raised, at least a degree above common nature, as the end of poetry is to please. This she is engaged to do, and if she was to give us nature only such as she is, her labor would be absolutely thrown away, with only the barren merit of having drawn a picture of all the defects that are met with in nature.

This is the doctrine of all the masters who have ever handled this question.

According to Aristotle, the stile of poetry should be clear, and not common, σαφὴ μὲν καὶ μὴ ταπεινὴ. To be clear, says he, it should make use of proper terms, and such as are generally in use; but it should have nothing to raise it above common discourse. But how must it be raised then? why, by adding every thing that is capable of raising it above the vulgar strain, such as recalling to use those words in our own language, as by long disuse may have grown old and almost forgotten; borrowing others from different languages; by coining new ones, or composing some from many others; by lengthening or shortening those we have already, by employing metaphors, varying the turn of expression, &c.

On this principle Horace built his *Os magna sonaturum*, that is to say, an expression which has nothing of low or vulgar in it. Petronius expresses himself still more clearly on this subject: "Common-place and ordinary expressions,



“ says he, are to be avoided as much as possible,  
 “ and only such made use of as are above the  
 “ vulgar stamp: then we may join with the  
 “ greatest master in the poetic art,

Odi profanum vulgus !                      Hor.

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## ARTICLE II.

Painting has all its rules in imitation.

This article will be very short, for the principle of imitating elegant nature does almost of its own accord apply itself to painting; especially as an application of it to poetry has been made before. So great is the conformity between these two arts, that to treat of them both at the same time, we should have nothing to do, but to put poetry, fable and versification in the room of painting, design and coloring. It is the same genius that creates both in the one and the other; the same taste that directs the artist in the choice, disposition and assortment of the greater and lesser parts; that makes the groupes and contrasts; that lays on and adapts the colors; in a word, that regulates the composition, design and colouring; so that we shall only say a word or two concerning the methods used by painting in imitating and expressing nature.

Supposing the ideal painting has been conceived according to the rules of beauty, or the painter's imagination. His first operation to express or produce it is the *sketch*. This is what begins to give a being real and independent of the mind to the object he is about to paint:

this

this gives him the bounds he is to observe. It is called the *design* or *draught*.

The second operation is to place the lights and shades; to give objects their proper roundness, swell and relieve; to connect, detach them from the plan, to draw them near, or to distance them from the spectators. This is the *chia-oscuro*.

The third and last operation is, to lay on the colours, such as the objects have them in nature, to blind, to shade and weaken them, as there is occasion, in order to make them appear natural. This is called *coloring*. These are the three rules of picturesque expression; and so evidently included in the general principle of imitation, as to leave no room for the least apparent difficulty on that score. For all the rules in painting are reducible to the two following heads, the deceiving the eye by the resemblance; and the making us believe, that the object is real at the same time that it is only an image. This is evident. Let us now proceed to music and dancing. These two arts we shall consider a little more at large; but still let it be remembered, that the chief intention in establishing the principle of imitation, is wholly with regard to literature, which is the master-subject of our work.

### ARTICLE III.

Music and dancing have each their rules in imitation.

Music had formerly a much greater compass than it has at present. It gave graces to all

kinds of sounds and gestures: it comprehended singing, dancing, versification and declamation: *Ars decoris in vocibus & motibus*. But since versification and dancing have formed two separate arts, and that declamation, left to itself, is no longer reckoned an art, Music, properly so called, is reduced simply to what we stile tune, that is, *the science of sounds*.

Nevertheless, as this distinction came rather from the artists than from the arts themselves, which have been always closely connected to one another: we will hear treat of music and dancing without separating them. The mutual comparison we shall make of one with the other, will help to make us the better acquainted with them; they will bestow light on each other here, as on the stage they lend to each other beauties and graces.

### CH A P. I.

The nature of music and dancing is to be known from that of tones and gestures.

**M**EN have three ways of expressing their ideas and sentiments; speech, tone of voice, and gesture. By gesture we understand the exterior motions and attitudes of the body: *Gestus*, says Cicero, *est conformatio quædam & figura totius oris & corporis*.

I mentioned speech first, as being in possession of the first rank, and that men commonly give most attention to it; but nevertheless the tone of voice, and gesture have many advantages over it;

it; first, they are of a more natural use; we have recourse to them when speech fails us; in the next place, they have a greater latitude, and are as so many universal interpreters, which accompany us to the remotest ends of the earth, and make us intelligible to the most barbarous nations, and even to animals. In short, they are consecrated in a particular manner to our sentiments. Speech indeed is the organ of reason, it instructs and convinces us; but the tone and gesture are those of the heart: they move, win, and persuade. Speech expresses passion only by means of ideas, to which sentiments are affixed, as it were by reflection (a); whereas the tone and gesture go directly to the heart.

In a word, speech is a language of institution, which men have made more distinctly to communicate their ideas; tones and gestures are the dictionaries of simple nature, and contain a language which is born with us, and which we make use of to express every thing that relates to the wants, and

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(a) Words may express the passions by simply naming them; as when I say, *I love you*, or *I hate you*; but if I do not accompany these words, either by some tone of voice or gesture, I rather express an idea than a sentiment. Whereas a single motion, a look, speaks the passion immediately. *Affectus languescant necesse, nisi voce, vultu, totius propè habitu corporis inardescant.* For example, the finest speech in the character of Lear would have but little effect on our passions without Mr. Garrick's gesture, joined to his elegant and moving tone of voice: the heart would remain cold and unmoved; or if it should be warmed at all, it must be by figuring to itself the tone and gesture that must necessarily accompany such words coming from a person in the situation of Lear.



to the preservation of our being: it is short, lively, and emphatical. What a foundation for arts, whose design is to move the soul is this language, whose every expression is, rather that of human nature itself than of mankind.

Speech, gesture, tone of voice have each their degrees, wherein they answer to the three kinds of arts mentioned in the first chapter. In the first degree, they express simple nature, and that only as necessity requires. This is the genuine picture of our thoughts and sentiments: and such is, or ought to be, our conversation. In the second degree, nature is polished by the help of art, to add pleasure to utility: here they chuse with some care, but with restraint and modesty, the most proper and agreeable words, tones, and gestures; this is oratory, and the more nervous kind of narration. In the third, they have nothing but pleasure in view, and here these three expressions have not only all the natural grace and force, but also all the perfection that art can add to them; I mean measure, motion, modulation and harmony. And this is versification, music and dancing; which are the greatest possible perfections of words, tones of voice, and gestures. (a).

From

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(a) It follows from this principle, that as in the arts made for pleasure every thing should be in the utmost possible degree of perfection, the tones and gestures in theatrical declamation should be all measured, as well as the words, and noted by the composer. The ancients saw the necessity of this, and made it the rule of their practice. See the Abbé Vauvenargues's dissertation on this subject,

From what has been said, I shall draw the following inferences:

1. That the principal object of music and dancing should be the imitation of the sentiments or passions, whereas that of poetry is chiefly the imitation of actions: but as the passions and actions are almost always joined in nature, and that they also ought to be found always together in the arts, this difference will arise between poetry and music, and dancing; that in the first, the passions will be employed as the means or springs to prepare and produce the actions; and in the latter, the action will serve only as a kind of canvas designed, to bear, support, bring together, and join the different passions, that the artist has a mind to express.

2. That if the tone of voice, and the gestures, had a signification or meaning before they were

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tom. 8. of the memoirs of the academy of inscriptions. But with us, custom and prejudice oppose this necessary regulation. I say prejudice, because probability would not at all be injured herein, seeing that on one side elegant nature not only requires the action to be perfect, but that the language and pronunciation should likewise be as elegant as the circumstances and situation of the actors will permit; and that on the other side, declamatory dancing and music would adopt the very characters and expression of natural declamation. The measure destroys nothing, it only helps to regulate what was before irregular, but leaves it's nature unaltered. The finest recitatives we have, are only formed on natural declamation. When Lulli composed his pieces, he used frequently to desire Champmelle, the most famous French actress of her time, to declaim the words; he immediately noted down her tones, and these he at his leisure reduced to rules of art.

regulated by measure, such a signification should be preserved in music and dancing, as words preserve theirs in versification; and consequently that every kind of music and dancing should have a determinate sense or meaning.

3. That the additions the tone or gestures receive from art, ought to contribute to the augmentation of this sense, and the rendering their expression more lively and strong. We shall now proceed to a farther explanation. These three consequences or inferences shall be more fully illustrated in the following chapters.

## CH A P. II.

INFERENCE I. That the passions are the principal object of music and dancing.

THE actions and passions are almost constantly united and blended with each other in every action whatever that man performs. They reciprocally arise from or shew each other. They should therefore be found as constantly together in the arts. When an artist describes any action, it should be always animated by some passion; and, *vice versâ*, the passions he represents should be kept up by some action. There will need no examples to prove this. But as the arts, with respect to the means they employ, in expressing the several parts of nature, may be better suited to express one part than another, therefore that part which has the predominance should be that which holds the nearest relation with the means of expression. Thus

Thus poetry having made choice of speech to express itself by, which is the language peculiar to the mind; and music and the dance having chosen for the same purpose, the one the tone of voice, the other the gesture or motion of the body, and both these methods of expression being particularly consecrated to the sentiment; every true poet should therefore attach himself in a particular manner to the action and discourse, and every true musician to the sentiments and passions: but if these two parts are inseparable from each other, then should the artist in either case so connect them, that either the passions may be subordinate to the actions, or these to the passions; so far at least as relates to the mode of expression, which predominates in that particular genius wherein the artist exercises himself.

Thus in most tragedies which are made to be set to music, what strikes us the most, is not the action itself, but the sentiments arising from the several situations occasioned by the action; whereas in other tragedies, it is the achievement of the hero which strikes us with admiration; and every passage that has not an immediate relation to this action of the hero, are only so many foreign, or, at best, misplaced beauties.

Hence it follows, that a simple action, idea or image is not a subject proper for music; and for this reason it is that long narrations, expositions, transitions, metaphors, strokes of wit; and, in short, whatever is the effect or produce of the memory



memory or reflection; are in general so very refractory to the setting to music.

On the contrary we find, that whatever expresses the sentiments, seems of itself to slide into it. The tones or notes are as it were half-formed in the words themselves; and a very little art is sufficient to extract them, especially when the sentiment to be expressed is plain and simple, and proceeds from the abundance of the heart; for the heart is not without its metaphysics; but if the sentiment be refined, or subtle, music can no longer convey it, or at best but in part, by which the expression becomes obscure, equivocal, weak, or perplexed; and, from that instant, incapable of producing that agreeable impression which affects, or at least should affect alike the learned and the ignorant, when addressed ingenuously in the language of nature.

It is in dancing as in music, the declamation languishes if the soul is not moved, and when instruction alone is the object; for in this case, all the motions or attitudes of the body become of little or no signification, and are beheld without any sort of pleasure. A gesture is beautiful only as it expresses the most lively passions of the soul, in short the soul itself. In logical arguments it would be ridiculous, as being of no use to the thing we are speaking of; here the person reasons coolly and deliberately: and if these calm reasonings are sometimes accompanied by a slight gesture, or a certain natural tone of voice, this is only to shew, that the mind of the reasoner is moved

moved with a desire, that the truths he is delivering may persuade our hearts, at the same time that he is endeavouring to convince the head. Thus we see, that it is always the sentiment that produces this expression.

### CHAP. III.

INFER. II. All kind of music and dancing should have a determinate sense and meaning.

**W**E shall not repeat in this place, that the tunes in music, and the motions in dancing, are only imitations, or an artificial texture of poetic sounds and gestures partaking alone of the probable. The passions they express are as fabulous, as the actions in poetry; and like them the sole creation of genius and taste: nothing here is truth; the whole is artifice. Or if it sometimes happens, that the musician or the dancer should really feel the sentiment they express; this is a circumstance quite accidental, as being without the least design on the side of art. It is a chance-picture on a live skin, which should only be on canvas. Art is formed but for deceit; this I think we have already sufficiently shewn. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the expressions only.

Expressions, in general, are of themselves neither natural nor artificial; they are only signs, and whether made use of by art or nature, or joined to reality or fiction, truth or falsehood; though, on these occasions, they may change their qualities, they still retain their proper nature

and condition. Words are the same in conversation as in poetry; lineaments and colors in natural objects, as in the picture; consequently the tones and gestures should be the same in the passions whether real or fictitious. Art neither creates nor destroys expressions, it only regulates, strengthens and polishes them; and as it cannot separate itself from nature to create things, neither can it to express them. This is a principle.

If I was to own I could not be pleased at a discourse, I did not understand, my confession would have nothing singular in it: but was I to say the same thing of a piece of music; a musician might ask me, if I thought myself connoisseur enough to enter into the merit of a piece of music that has been worked up with the greatest care; and I would venture to reply, yes; for the business of music is to move. I do not pretend to calculate sounds, or their relation between themselves, or to our organs; neither do I undertake to discourse of the vibration of chords, nor of mathematical proportion; I abandon these speculations to the learned theorist; they are only like the grammatical or dialectical parts of a discourse, whose merits I may be sensible of without entering into the discussion: and shall observe, that as music speaks to me in tones, the language is natural to me, and if I do not understand it, art has corrupted nature, rather than mended it (a).

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(a) A man of an ordinary ear is a judge whether a passion is expressed in proper sounds, and whether the melody of those sounds be more or less pleasing.

We should judge in the same manner of a piece of music as of a picture, I see strokes, and colors in it whose meaning I understand; the piece strikes, it affects me. But what would be said of a painter, who should content himself with laying on his canvas a parcel of bold strokes and a heap of the most lively colours, without any sort of resemblance to any known object. The application is very naturally made to music: there is no sort of disparity, or if there is, it strengthens my argument. The ear, say they, is much more delicate than the eye; then I am more capable to judge of a piece of music than of a picture.

I appeal to the composer himself: which are the parts he approves of the most, which is he the most fond of, and to which is he continually returning with a sort of a secret pleasure? Are they not those, where his music does as it were speak, where it has a clear, obvious and determinate meaning? Why are some objects and passions made choice of in preference to others? Is it not, that these are more easily expressed by the artist, and that the spectators are sooner struck with the expression (a).

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(a) Having compared music to oratorical elocution, let us hear what Cicero says on this latter, *Hoc etiam mirabilis debet videre (in eloquentiâ, quia cæterarum artium studia sæpe reconditis, atque abditis à fontibus hauriuntur: dicendi autem omnis ratio in medio posita, communi quodam in usu, atque in hominum more & sermone versatur: ut in cæteris id maximè excellat, quod longissimè sit ob imperitorum intelligentiâ, sensuque disjunctum: in dicendo autem vitium vel maximum sit à vulgari genere orationis atque à consuetudine communis sensus abhorrens.* This is very easily applied.

Let



Let then the profound musician applaud himself as he pleases, for having by a mathematical concord conciliated sounds that seemed to have the utmost antipathy to each other; but unless they have some signification, some meaning, I shall look on them in the light of those gestures of an orator, which serve merely to shew that he is alive; or compare them to the verses we sometimes meet with, which are only metered noise. No music is so wretched as that which has not some character of its own. There is not a single sound in this art, but has its model in nature, and ought to be at least the beginning of some expression, as a letter or a syllable is the beginning of a word (b).

There are two kinds of music; of which, one imitates only such tones and sounds as are without passion, and answers to landscape-painting: the other expresses animated sounds, and such as belongs to the sentiments, and answers to paintings of life.

The musician is at least as much confined by the rules of his art as the painter, he is constant-

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(b) This holds equally good both in a simple air, and an elaborate piece of music, they should each of them have a sense, a signification, with this difference however, that the former being addressed to the vulgar, supposes no previous study necessary to comprehend it; whereas the other requires a kind of musical erudition, with a nice and practiced ear. It is a sort of language made for the learned; and supposes the auditors possessed of certain lights, without which it would not be possible for them to judge of its merit. Query, Whether a language which is designed for the learned only, is to be esteemed truly eloquent?

ly, and in every part of his work, liable to be brought into comparison with that nature he professes to imitate. If he describes the roaring of a storm, the murmurs of a rivulet, or the breathings of the zephyrs, his tones are in nature, and thence only he is to take them; if he draws an ideal object, which never had any real existence, as the roaring of the earth, the groans of ghosts arising from the tomb, like the poet he should

*Aut famam sequere, aut sibi convenientia fingere.*

*Hor. Ar. Poet.*

Or follow fame, or in th' invented tale,

At least, let probability prevail.

He will meet with sounds in nature correspondent to his idea, provided it be musical in itself; and a true composer will know these the instant they offer themselves: this is fact; for when once discovered, they appear as if well known before; though perhaps he might never in reality have perceived them till that time. And whatever riches nature may offer to the musician, yet unless we can comprehend the meaning of the expressions it includes, they are no longer riches to us; but like a foreign idiom, that only forms an unknown language, and from which we consequently can draw no advantage.

If music has a meaning even in the symphony, which is but a kind of half-life, or lesser part of its existence, what must it be in the tune itself, where it becomes the picture of the human heart? “Every sentiment, says Cicero, has its

“ particular

“ particular tone or gesture to express it, as a  
 “ word annexed to an idea.” *Omnis motus animi  
 suum quemdam à naturâ habet vultum & sonum &  
 gestum.* Which by their continuity should form  
 a kind of regular discourse; therefore if I meet  
 with expressions which confuse me, for want of  
 being properly introduced or explained by those  
 which precede or follow them, if they are either  
 contradictory in themselves, or disgusting to me,  
 I certainly can take no pleasure in them. It is cer-  
 tain, you will say, that we easily distinguish some  
 passions in a piece of music, such as love, joy, or  
 sorrow; and yet for a few such palpable expres-  
 sions, we find a thousand others, whose design  
 we cannot directly ascertain.

’Tis true, I cannot always tell why I am pleas-  
 ed with a fine piece of music, but am I to infer  
 from hence, that it has no design in its expres-  
 sions? If I feel, it matters not whether I can ex-  
 press my sensation or not:

*Causa latet, vis est notissima.*

The cause is latent, but the effect is plain.

The heart has its understanding independent of  
 words, and when it is once touched, it has com-  
 prehended all. Moreover, as there are great  
 things, which words cannot reach; there are al-  
 so others so nice and delicate as to elude their  
 power of expression. These are chiefly such as  
 regard the sensations.

We may venture to conclude then, that, al-  
 though a piece of music may be the most exactly  
 calculated

calculated as to its several notes, or the most geometric in its concords; yet, with all these qualities, if it does not carry with it some certain signification, unless it is expressive, it can be compared to nothing but a prism, which reflects the most beautiful colors, without forming any single image.

## C H A P. IV.

INFER. III. Of the qualifications necessary to the expressions in music and dancing.

**T**HERE are certain natural qualities belonging to tones and gestures considered in themselves, and simply as expressions; and there are others, which art has added to strengthen and embellish them. We shall proceed to consider both.

Since sounds in music, and gestures in dancing, have each a determinate signification as well as words in poetry, it follows, that the musical and gestural expression should have the same qualities as the poetic and oratorical elocution; and whatever we shall advance on this subject, will equally agree with music, dancing, eloquence and poetry; or indeed, may rather be considered, as an application of the rules of both poetic and oratorical elocution to music and dancing.

In the same manner as the garment is made to fit the body, so should every expression be adapted to the thing it should express. Thus, unity and variety being necessary to every poetic or artificial subject; these two qualities are consequently necessary to expression.

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The fundamental character of the expression lies in the subject, and this determines the proper degree of sublimity or simplicity of strength or sweetness to be observed in the stile. If joy and festivity be the subject of music and dancing, every modulation, every motion should wear a smiling aspect; and though the tunes and airs may in their succession vary and assist each other, yet the fundamental character common to them should always be preserved. This is the unity of expression (*a*). However, as one passion is never alone, and that others which are governed by it observe its orders in bringing or removing objects, according as they are agreeable or disagreeable; hence the composer is furnished even from the unity of his subject with the means of varying it: he introduces alternately love, hatred, fear, sorrow, and hope. In imitation of the orator, who employs all the machinery and variations of his art, without altering the general strain of his stile. Now an air of dignity, now a liveliness and brilliancy of expression, appears according as the subject is

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(*a*) We frequently see our composers sacrificing this general tone, this expression of the soul, which should be diffused through every particle of a musical composition, to an accidental idea, which shall at the same time have scarce any connection with the principal subject. They will stop short to amuse themselves with the description of a brook, a zephyr, or some other word which carries with it a musical image. But all these particular expressions should be included in the main subject; and they can only preserve their own particular character therein, by incorporating themselves as it were with the general character of the sentiments they express.

serious

serious or weighty, amusing or simple. For what should we think of an orator, who should in one part of his discourse speak in terms becoming the mouth of a magistrate, and in another with all the buffoonery of a valet in a comedy.

Besides the general tone of expression, which may be termed the style of music and dancing, there are other qualifications which regard each expression in particular, viz.

1. The first merit of music, dancing, and eloquence is to be conspicuous, *Prima virtus perspicuitas*. Of what signification is it to me, that there is a beautiful edifice in a pleasant valley, if it is obscured by night and darkness? It is not expected, that each of these sounds should bring with it an absolute and determinate sense; but they should all in general contribute to this purpose. If not a whole period, at least a member, a word, or a syllable, every tone, every modulation and step ought to lead to a sentiment, or give us one.

2. The expressions should be just: sentiments like colors, if faintly expressed, lose the greatest part of their beauty, and have their nature quite changed, or at least rendered equivocal.

3. They should be lively, often finely-touched and delicate. Every one is acquainted with the passions to a certain degree, if the artist carries them no farther than that, he has at best but the merit of an historian, a servile imitator. We must go much farther if we seek beautiful nature. There are in music and dancing, as well as in painting,

painting, beauties which artists call light and transitory, fine strokes which escape in the ecstacy of passion, sighs, tender accents, and certain inclinations of the head; these are the touches that warm, awaken and animate the mind.

4. They should be easy and simple, all that looks like constraint gives pain and fatigue to us. The looker-on, or hearer, is in unison with him that speaks or acts; and we cannot with impunity be spectators of his pain or trouble.

5. Lastly, the expressions should be new, especially in music. There is no art where the taste is more craving and more nice: *Judicium aurium superbissimum*. The reason of this, is, our facility in taking the impression of sounds: *Naturâ ad numeros ducimur*. As the ear carries the sentiment to the heart in all its force, a second impression is almost useless, and leaves our souls inactive and indifferent; from thence seems the necessity of continually varying the modes, the motions and the passions. Happily these all depend on each other; as they have one common cause affecting them all, the same passion is susceptible of all kind of forms; and is at times a roaring lion, a purling stream, or a fire that kindles and bursts forth through jealousy, fury or despair.

Such are the natural qualifications of tones and gestures considered in themselves, and as words in prose. Let us now see what art can add to this in music and dancing, taken in their proper signification.

Tones

Tones and gestures are not so unconstrained in art as they are in nature. In this latter they acknowledge no other rules, than what arise from a kind of instinct, whose authority is very pliable; by this alone they are at will directed, varied, strengthened or weakened. But in art there are strict rules, confined limits which they must not exceed. Every thing there is nicely calculated; 1. By measure, which directs the duration of each tone and gesture. 2. By motion, which quickens or retards this duration, without increasing or diminishing the number of the tones, or gestures, or making any alteration in their quality. 3. By melody, which connects these tones and gestures, and so as to form one continued succession (a). 4. By harmony, which regulates the concords, when several different parts are joined together to form one whole. And we are not to imagine, that these rules do in the least destroy or alter the natural signification of the tones and gestures; they only render them more forcible, by giving them a polish, and increase their power by the addition of their graces: *Cur ergò vires ipsas specie solvi putem, quando nec ulla res sine arte satis valeat?* (b)

Measures, motion, melody, and harmony, may equally direct the words, tones and gestures, that is to say, they equally belong to versifica-

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(a) Melody is here taken in a figurative sense with respect to dancing; and signifies no more than a regular and uniform succession of motions.

(b) Quintil. ix. 4.



tion, music and dancing. That they belong to verification has been already proved (c). In dancing, be it performed by one or more, the measure consists in the steps; the motion in the quickness or slowness; the melody in the pace or continuity of the steps; and the harmony in the concord of all these parts with the instrument that is playing, and especially with the rest of the dancers. For the dance has its solo, duet, chorus, repeat, ritornello, &c. which are governed by the same rules as the parts in a concert of music.

Measure and movement give life, as I may say, to the musical composition; by the former the musician imitates the progression and motion of natural sounds, and gives to each the just extent necessary to make it a part of the regular structure of the tune: they are like words properly measured and adjusted to be ingrafted in a verse. Lastly, Melody gives these sounds the proper place and rank they are to hold; and joins, divides or conciliates them according to the nature of the object, the musician proposes to imitate. The brook murmurs, the thunder grumbles, and the swallow skims round us. Among the passions, some die away in gentle sighs, others break forth impetuously, and others again shudder with horror. Melody, to adapt itself to these various forms, varies occasionally the tones, breaks and modulations, and employs with a judicious a

even dissonances themselves; for dissonances being in nature, as well as other tones claim of consequence, an equal right of entering into musical composition; where they not only serve as a kind of salt to relish the rest, but to contribute in a manner peculiar to themselves to characterise the musical expression. Nothing is so irregular as the motion of the passions of love, anger, and discord. Oft-times to express them, the voice must suddenly become harsh and unmusical; now if art does but a very little soften these discords in nature, the justness of the expression makes up for the harshness of it. It stands with the composer to present these with precaution, moderation and understanding.

Harmony, last of all, concurs to form a perfect musical expression. Every harmonic sound is of a triple nature, having its fifth and third; this is the common doctrine of Descartes, Father Merenne, Mr. Sauveur, and Mr. Rameau, which latter has made it the basis of his new system of music. Hence it follows, that the most simple cry of joy has the elements of its harmony and concords in nature: and is like a ray of light, which, if refracted by the prism, will exhibit every color that can enter into the richest or most exquisite piece of painting; in the same manner divide or vary any sound as much as it will bear, and you will find that all its different parts shall be in concord; pursue this division throughout a whole tune that appears a simple one, and you shall have this  
same

same tune, in some sort multiplied and diversified by itself; there will be the trebles and basses, which are nothing else than the elements of the original tune unfolded and made stronger in the parts thus separated in order to augment the first expression. The accompaniment of these different parts resemble the union of tones, gestures and words, in declamation; or if you will, the regular motions of the feet, arms and head in dancing. These expressions are different in themselves indeed, but they have all one signification and meaning. So that if a simple tune is an expression of nature imitated, the trebles and basses are only this expression multiplied, which by heightening and repeating the strokes makes the image more lively, and consequently renders the imitation more perfect.

That we may leave nothing imperfect in what concerns the polite arts in general, after having explained their common rules and peculiar differences, we shall now say a word or two concerning the manner in which they are to adapt and suit themselves to each other, when united in one subject; and then proceed to a particular application of the fundamental principle of imitation, to the several kinds of literature.

#### C H A P. V.

Of the union of the polite arts.

**A**LTHOUGH poetry, music and dancing sometimes divide themselves in compliance with different tastes and inclinations of men; yet,

yet as nature created their principles for union, and to concur in one sole end, which it that of conveying our ideas and sentiments, such as we ourselves feel them, into the minds and hearts of those, to whom we desire to communicate them: these arts have never more charms than when they are united. *Cum valeant multum verba per se, & vox propriam vim adjiciat rebus, & gestus motusque significet aliqua, profecto perfectum quiddam, cum omnia coièrint, fieri necesse est, Quintil.*

x. 3.

Thus when artists separate these three arts, to cultivate each in particular with more care, they should never lose sight of the first institution of nature, nor think that they can intirely be abstracted from each other: they ought to be united; nature demands it, taste exacts it; but now, upon what condition? it is a combination, of which this is the basis, and the principal article.

It is of the different arts, when they join to treat of the same subject, as it is of the different parts, which are found in a subject treated by a single art: there ought to be a principal one for the most distant parts. When poets and painters represent an action, they place a principal actor in it, whom they call the hero, by way of excellence. It is this hero that is placed in the most advantageous light; he is the principal part, and is the life and soul of all that moves about him. What a multitude of warriors in the Iliad! what different parts in Diomedes, Ulysses, Ajax, Hector,



tor, &c. there is not one but has some relation to Achilles. They are steps, which the poet has prepared to elevate our ideas to the sublime valor of his principal hero: the interval would have been less sensible, if it had not been measured by that kind of gradation of heroes; and the idea of Achilles less great and less perfect, without the comparison.

The arts where united ought to be the same as heroes, one alone should exceed, and the others remain in the second rank. If poetry exhibits a spectacle, music and dancing (a) may appear with it, but must only be to set it off, and to mark more strongly the ideas and sentiments contained in the verses. It must not be that fine set music, nor that studied gesture which would darken the poetry, and would rob it of one part of the spectator's attention; but an inflexion of voice always simple, and regulated on the single occasion and want of the words; a movement of the body always natural, and which seems to borrow nothing from art.

If it is music that appears, that alone has a right to shew all its beauties. The stage is then in its possession, poetry has the second rank, and dancing the third. It is no longer those pompous and magnificent verses, those daring descriptions, those glittering images; it is a poetry simple, natural, and that flows with softness and negligence, and seems to let fall the words. The

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(a) Dancing here signifies no more than the art of gesture.

reason of this is, that the verses should follow the tune, and not precede it. The words in such a case, although made before the music, are only like so many strokes of force, which they give to the musical expression to render the sense more clean and intelligible. And in this light we ought to consider Quinault's poetry: I am sensible that many object to the effeminacy of his verse; these I would refer to Lulli, who composed all his pieces, and who could easily justify him. The most beautiful verses are not those which bear music best, but those which are the most moving: ask a composer which of these two passages in Racine's *Athaliah* are the most easily handled. The first is as follows:

Quel carnage de toutes parts !  
 On égorge à la fois les enfans, les vieillards,  
 Et la fille & la mere, & la sœur & le frere,  
 Le fils dans le bras de son pere ;  
 Que de corps entassés ! que de membres épars  
 Privés de sépulture !

Thus Englished :

What slaughter reigns around !  
 The murth'ring sword does young and old confound ;  
 The sister with the brother,  
 The father with the mother  
 Meet equal death ;  
 And clasp'd in the fond parent's arms the son resigns  
 his breath.

The other follows this immediately in the same scene :

Helas ! si jeune encore,  
 Par quel crime ai-je pu mériter mon malheur ?  
 Ma vie à peine a commencé d'éclorre,  
 Je tomberai comme une fleur  
 Qui n'a vu qu'une aurore.  
 Helas ! si jeune encore,  
 Par quel crime ai-je pu mériter mon malheur ?

Thus Englished :  
 Ah ! how can one so young as I !  
 Merit this cruel destiny ?  
 'Tis but the dawning of my day,  
 And must I like a new blown flow'r,  
 That fades and blossoms in an hour,  
 Shrink and decay ?

Dancing is still modefter than poetry : this is in measure, but the gesture does scarce any more for music than it has already done for the dancer ; and if it shews itself in music with more force, it is because there is more passion in music than in poetry, and consequently more matter to exercise it ; since, as we have said before, gesture and the tone of voice are consecrated in an especial manner to our sentiments.

In short, if 'tis dancing that presides, music must not shine so as to prejudice it, but only lend its assistance to mark with more precision its motion and its character. The violin and the dancers must form a concert : and though the violin leads, it ought only to be considered as an attendant on the other. The subject belongs

by

by right to the dancer, if he is either guided or followed, he has always the principal rank, and nothing should obscure him, and the ear should be occupied no more than is just necessary to prevent the distraction of the sight.

At present we seldom join words to what is properly called dancing; but this is no argument against the possibility of such an union: that they were united formerly no one will deny. With antients they danced to the voice of a singer, as we do at present to the sound of the instrument, and then the words were in the same measure with the steps.

It belongs to poetry, music and dancing, to present us the images of actions, and the human passions; but to architecture, painting and sculpture, to prepare the place and scene of the spectacle, which they are to do in a manner suitable to the dignity of the actors, and the quality of the subjects they undertake. The gods inhabit Olympus, kings their palaces, the citizen lives in his house, and the shepherd sits under the shady tree. Architecture must form these places, and embellish them by the help of painting and sculpture. All the universe belongs to the polite arts. They have all the riches of nature at their disposal. But they ought to make use of them according to the laws of decency. Every dwelling should be the image of him that inhabits it, of his dignity, his power, and his taste.



This is the rule that ought to guide arts in the construction and adorning of palaces. Ovid could not make the palace of the Sun too splendid, nor Milton the garden of Eden too delicious; but this magnificence would be condemnable even in a king, because it is above his condition.

*Singula quaque locum teneant sortita decenter.*

### End of the FIRST PART.





THE  
PRINCIPLES  
OF  
LITERATURE.

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PART II.

Wherein the nature and rules of the several kinds of poetry are explained upon the principles of imitating elegant nature.



**I**F all the polite arts, at the head of which is poetry, have no other object than to imitate nature, each in the manner which constitutes its specific difference, thereby to excite in us pleasing sensations; it follows of course, that a treatise of poetry should be no other than an exposition of the art of imitating her by a manner peculiar to itself, which is by language, and that the laws relating to the beauties or de-

## CO THE PRINCIPLES

fects to be found in the different species of poetry, can be no other than consequences of this principle of imitation; this clue will conduct us safely through the several stages we have to go, and if it should at any time chance to escape the reader, a very little degree of attention will suffice him to resume it.

The different species of poetry are reducible to four general articles, which shall make the subject of as many sections.

Poets sometimes relate things past, in the manner of historians, but they are historians despised by the muses. Sometimes they rather chuse to imitate the painter, and present objects to the sight, that the spectator may be more sensibly impressed by the truths which he sees before him, and himself deduce the lessons of instruction they contain: at other times they unite sense with sound, and deliver themselves entirely up to the passions inspired by music. Lastly, they abandon fiction, and employ all the graces of their art in adorning truth; a right which seemingly belongs to prose alone. Hence arise the four kinds into which we divide poetry, viz. the Narrative, the Dramatic, the Lyric, and the Didactic.

In making this division we would not be understood to mean that these different kinds are so distinct from each other, as never to be united; for the contrary happens in almost all of them, and we seldom find one single species alone in any kind of poem. The lyric poem has its narrations, narrative poetry its strongly painted pas-  
sions,

sions, and every where fable is found blended with history, truth with falsehood, and possibility with reality. Poets being obliged, as we have elsewhere observed, by the nature of their office, to please, look upon themselves intitled to attempt every thing to gain their end.

## S E C T. I.

## Of Narrative Poetry.

**T**HE whole of what we have to say relating to this kind of poetry is comprehended in three articles; the first containing the apologue or fable, the second pastoral, and the third the epic. In the first of these, the wolf and the lamb shall discourse and act as the fabulist has been pleased to fancy; the shepherd and his rustic companion shall succeed; and thirdly gods and heroes shall rouse the attention: and we shall strictly observe, through the whole of our progress, the gradation from the simple to the compound, from the easy to the difficult, from the low to the sublime.

## A R T I C L E I.

## Of the apologue or fable.

## C H A P. I.

## What the apologue or fable is.

**F**ABLE is strictly speaking the drama of children, and differs from other representations only in the pettiness and simplicity of its performers. No Alexanders or Cæsars make their



appearance on this little theatre ; but in their room the ant and the fly : who act mankind after their manner, and give us an entertainment more pure, and perhaps more instructive, than those actors in human shape.

This species of poetry is doubtless alike subject to the rules of imitation with others ; for the manners of men are here represented in animals. Only here it is supposed, that every thing in nature has the gift of speech. And this supposition is founded on a truth ; for every thing in the universe does in some measure speak to the sight, and the ideas conveyed thereby to the learned mind are as clear, as if transmitted by the organs of hearing.

On this principle the inventors of fable thought they might be allowed to begin, by giving speech and thoughts to animals, who being possessed of the same organs with ourselves, may appear to be mute, only perhaps because we do not understand their language : then trees, as being indowed with a kind of life, were soon after indowed also by the poets with sentiment. And at length the whole moving creation, and every thing that exists in the universe. Not only the wolf and the lamb, the oak and the bullrush, represented particular characters, but even *the iron pot, and the earthen pot* ; only *Senior judgment* and *Miss imagination*, with whatever resemble them, have not been admitted on this theatre : because it is doubtless much more difficult to give a body and character to these beings purely spiritual, than to bestow

bestow a soul and spirit on bodies, which appear to have some degree of analogy with our own organs.

All the rules relating to the apologue are included in those of the epopoiea and drama, which we shall examine in their places. Change but the names, and the frog, swelling himself up to rival the bulk of the ox, becomes the gentleman cit, who apes the qualities of the courtier, or Cesar, who falls the victim of his own ambition; or the first man, who was degraded from his glorious state for attempting to equal himself to God. The allegory may be pursued *ad infinitum*; for

. . . . Mutato nomine, de te  
Fabula narratur.

*We are not to exalt ourselves above our condition*; is a moral alike necessary to be inculcated upon the minds of children, of a people, of kings, and of all mankind. Wisdom can, by the assistance of poetry, take every form necessary to insinuate itself into the heart; and as the taste differs according to ages and conditions, she stoops to play with the infant, and to laugh with the vulgar. To kings she speaks with the dignity of a queen, and in this manner deals round her lessons to all mankind; she joins the agreeable and the useful, when she would gain over the devotees of pleasure, or means to reward those who have instruction only in view.

A fable then, like other poems, should have an action. This action should be single, and interesting, should have a beginning, middle, and end; consequently, a prologue and intrigue, an unravelling of a scene of action, and actors, of which there should be two at least, or something to supply the place of a second. The characters of these actors should be established, kept up, and illustrated by their respective discourses and manners; and all in imitation of men, of which the animals are the copies, and maintain each a part agreeable to a certain analogy of characters between them. So that as what we see in fable, is, as it were, a design in miniature, of what will appear more at large in the other kinds of poetry; in like manner may this little treatise of it be considered as a kind of epitome or sketch of all the other kinds which are to follow.

#### Definition of the apologue.

A fable is a relation of an allegorical action, commonly attributed to animals. We shall now unfold this definition, and deduce from thence the particular rules for fable; then we shall give in a few words the history of this species of poetry; and lastly, produce some models therein, taken from the best and most celebrated fabulists.

X The apologue or fable is a narration and not a drama; for we do not behold the wolf in the fable bear off the lamb to devour it; we are only told that he did so.

Essential

## Essential qualities of narration.

Narration has three essential qualities, brevity, clearness and probability. X

1. It is rendered brief, by taking it up no higher than is just necessary, not fetching it back, so as to say: "I dressed myself this morning, then I went out, and then I called upon my friend." This would be like the impertinent author in Horace, who began his relation of the siege of Troy by the story of Leda's two eggs: MBx

*Qui gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo.*

It would have been sufficient to have said: "I called on my friend in the morning."

However, in some places, these minute details have a good effect. For example, where Terence in his *Andria* describes what happens at the funeral of Glycera's aunt. "They carry the body out of the house; we follow it; we come to the burying-place; they set fire to the pile, and every one bursts into tears."

And when La Fontaine describes the different motions of the rats, who, after several alarms, begin to creep out of their holes again, by saying,

*Mettent le nès a l'air, montrent un peu la tête;*

*Puis rentrent dans leurs nids à rats;*

*Puis resortant, font quatre pas;*

*Puis enfin se mettent en quête;*

*Mais voici bien une autre fête*

*Le penda ressuscite.*



He places these little circumstances here, as it were to amuse the reader, and lull him asleep, in pointing out every motion of the *gent trotte menu*, as he calls them, that he may rouse him again at once by the fall of the hanged body, which comes to life again. Nor is Mr. Gay less excellent in his description of a hare pursued by hunters:

A hare who went at early dawn  
To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn;  
Behind her heard the hunters cries,  
And from the deep-mouth'd thunder flies;  
She starts, she stops, she pants for breath,  
She hears the near advance of death:  
She doubles to mislead the hound,  
And measures back her mazy ground,  
Till fainting in the public way,  
Half dead with fear she gasping lay.

GAY'S FABLE, I. VOL. I.

But the brevity of the narration requires moreover that it should end precisely in the right place, without any useless addition, or mixture of foreign incidents; that nothing should be described or said that might have been understood without; in fine, that all repetition be avoided. Authors often think themselves very concise when they are in fact very prolix. It is not sufficient to have made use of but few words, those few should be such only as were absolutely necessary.

2. The narration will be clear when every circumstance is disposed in its proper place, and point of time; and the terms, and turns of expression

pression made use of, such as are suitable to the subject, just and simple, and not equivocal or confused.

3. It is probable, when it has all the appearances commonly found in truth; when the time, cause, place, disposition of the actors, and their respective characters, appear to conduce altogether to the main action; in a word, when every thing is drawn after nature, and agreeable to the ideas of those to whom the narration is made.

#### The ornaments of narration.

The ornaments or embellishments of a narration are of several kinds; and consist,

1. In images, descriptions, representations of places, persons and attitudes.

Images are often conveyed in a single word, and are sometimes called epithets.

Un mort s'en alloit tristement.

La dame au nez pointu.

LA FONT.

A wrinkled hag of wicked fame.

Yon animal so gay and proud.

GAY.

When these are drawn out to any length they are stiled descriptions.

As of the manners:

Un vieux renard, mais des plus fins

Grand croqueur de poulets, grand preneur de lapins

Sentant son renard d'une lieue.

LA FONT.

A fox full fraught with seeming sanctity;  
Who look'd like lent, and had the holy leer,  
And durst not sin before he said his pray'r.

DRYD. Cock and Fox.

Of the body:

Un heron au long bec emmanché d'un long cou  
Un jour sur ces longs pieds alloit je ne fais ou.

LA FONT.

High was his comb, and coral red withal,  
His bill was raven black, and shone like jet;  
Blue were his legs, and orient were his feet;  
White were his nails, like silver to behold,  
His body glitt'ring like the burnish'd gold.

DRYD. Cock and Fox.

And of places:

La lapin a l'aurore alloit faire sa cour  
Parmi le thim & la rosée.

LA FONT.

A hare went forth at early dawn  
To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn.

GAY.

2. In thoughts. The thoughts meant, here are such as have something particularly striking, which raises them above the common rank. Sometimes by their solidity.

Dieu prodigue ses biens  
A ceux qui font vœux d'être siens.

Ibid.

The man of pure and simple heart  
Thro' life dildains a double part.

GAY.

Sometimes

Sometimes by their singularity :

Un Lievre en son gîte songeoit  
Car què faire en un gîte, au moins que l'on ne songe?

LA FONT.

A monkey to reform the times  
Resolv'd to visit foreign climes.

GAY.

Or else by their wit and delicacy :

Au fond d'un temple eut été son image  
Avec ses traits, son souris, ses appas,  
Son art de plaire & de n'y penser pas.

LA FONT.

Tho' courts we quit to fly from care,  
And seek the peace of rural air ;  
Tho' groves and fields amuse our hours,  
We prune the trees, or raise the flow'rs :  
Yet care our every step pursues,  
Warning of blasts, and blighting dews ;  
Of plund'ring insects, snails, and rains,  
And droughts that starve the labor'd plains.  
Abroad, at home, the spectre's there,  
In vain we seek to fly from care :  
Since then thou'rt deem'd our constant guest  
Be kind and follow us no more,  
For care by-rights should go before.

GAY.

3. In allusions; or certain strokes, which form either a serious or comic figure with the subject of the narration. Thus the duck in La Fontaine, speaking to the tortoise, addresses him in this manner:

Voyez



Voyez vous ce large chemin ?

Nous vous voiturerons par l'air en Amerique,

Vous verrez maintes republiques,

Maint royaume, maint peuple. Et vous profiterez

Des differentes mœurs que vous remarquerez :

Ulysse en fit autant. On ne s'attendoit guère

A voir Ulysse en cette affaire.

LA FONT.

And dame Partlet and the cock in Dryden thus  
discourse on the subject of dreams.

Cato was in his time accounted wise,

And he condemns all dreams as empty lies.

Madam, quo' he, grammercy for your care,

But Cato whom you quoted you may spare;

For other men of more authority,

And by th' immortal powers as wise as he,

Maintain with sounder sense, that dreams forebode;

For Homer plainly says they come of God.

Nor Cato said it: but some modern fool

Impos'd in Cato's name on boys at school.

DRYD. Cock and Fox.

4. In the turns ; which should be sprightly,  
and striking.

Un bloc de marbre etoit si beau,

Qu'un statuaire en fit l'emplette,

Qu'en fera, dit-il, mon ciseau ?

Sera-t-il Dieu, table, ou cuvette ?

Il sera Dieu: même je veux

Qu'il ait en sa main un tonnerre

Tremblez humains, faites des vœux

Voilà le maître de la terre !

LA FONT.

This

This thought is evidently an imitation of that in Hor. Sat. 8. L. 1.

Olim truncus eram ficulnus, inutile lignum,  
Quem faber, incertus, scamnum facerit ne priapum,  
Maluit esse deum. Deus inde ego, surum aviumque,  
Maxima formido. —

In days of Yore, my godship stood,  
A very worthless log of wood,  
The joiner doubting, or, to shape us,  
Into a stool, or a priapus.  
At length resolv'd for reasons wise,  
Into a god to bid me rise;  
And now to birds and thieves I stand,  
A terror great.

5. In the expressions; of which, some are bold;  
Ne coupez point ces arbres, disoit le philosophe scythe,  
Ils iront assez tôt border le noir rivage.

Hold, says the god, first learn to know,  
True happiness from outward show.

Some rich : GAY.

Le moindre vent qui d'avanture  
Fait rider la face de l'eau.

Upon an April's blithsome day,  
When pleasure, ever on the wing,  
Return'd companion of the spring.

MOOR'S FAB. 14.  
Others again brilliant and picturesque.

As when la Fontaine calls the rainbow  
L'Eclatante

*l'Echarpe d'Iris*, and Ariel in Shakespear's tempest, describes himself;

On the curl'd clouds to ride—

Others again strong pointed :

Un renard qui cajole un corbeau sur la voix.

Now rapine with her harpy claws

His bosom tears. —

See him mad and drunk with pow'r,

Stand tott'ring on ambition's tow'r.

These are the chief qualifications of such narrations as are designed to amuse and please ; in the number of which are included all those of the poetic kind, and consequently the apologue or fable.

The action of the fable.

A fable is the relation of an action. An action is any thing undertaken by design and choice. If a building falls suddenly to the ground, it is an event, a fact. A man suffers himself to fall through inadvertence or carelessness, this is an act. He uses his endeavour to get up again, this is an action. A fact, does not suppose life, or an active power in the subject. An act, does suppose an active power, exercising itself, but blindly, without free will or choice. An action supposes, besides, life and motion, a choice and a determinate end, or purpose, and appertains to man alone, as making use of his reason.

The

The action of the fable should be single, just natural, and have a certain extent.

It should be single, that its parts should centre in one point; this in the fable is the moral. It should be just, that is, it should point out in a clear and distinct manner, what it proposes to teach us. It should be natural, that is to say, founded on nature; or at least, the received opinion. The reason of this is, that the mind will not bear to be embarrassed, misled or deceived. The fable of the two pigeons offends against the unity; that of the heifer, in partnership with the lion, against nature; and the two sparrows of M. de la Motte, against the rules of propriety; lastly, it should have a certain extent, that is, that we may easily distinguish a beginning, middle, and end; the beginning represents an undertaking, the middle the effort used to compleat that undertaking, answering to the intrigue or plot; lastly, the termination or ending of the action, which make the catastrophe, or unravelling of the plot.

Fable is allegorical.

The action of the fable is allegorical, that is to say, conceals a maxim, or a truth. Every fable is a kind of glass, in which we behold the justice or injustice of our own conduct, in that of the brute creation. Thus, the wolf and lamb are two personages, the one, of which represents a powerful and unjust man; the other, a man innocent, but feeble and defenceless; and, who,  
after



after having suffered the most injurious treatment from the former, at last falls the victim of his cruelty and malignance. Here we see mankind set forth in the actions of animals.

The truth arising from the allegorical narration of the fable is called the moral. This should be clear, short, and interesting, and admits of no metaphysics, long periods, or trivial maxims, such as the following.

*We should take care of our health.*

Phædrus, and la Fontaine, place the moral indifferently, before or after the narration, as taste may require or admit. The advantage is nearly the same to the reader, from the one as the other, his mind being equally exercised in the disquisition. In the first case, he has the pleasure of forming a combination of each incident on the narration, with truth. In the second case, he enjoys the pleasure of suspension; he is left to guess what is proposed to be taught him, and has at last the satisfaction of agreeing with the author, in his opinion, or the merit of yielding to him, when he has been mistaken in his conjecture.

There are three sorts of fables.

Fables are distinguished into three kinds, the rational, where the characters have the use of reason; as the old woman and her two maids. The moral, where they adopt the manners of men, without having the soul, which is the principal

cial one; as the wolf and the lamb; lastly, the mixed fable, where a rational person acts or discourses with an irrational one; as the man and the weasel.

#### The stile of fable.

The stile of fable should be familiar, plain, sprightly, pleasing, natural, easy, and simple.

The plain stile consists in expressing ourselves in as few words as possible, and in the common terms. Nothing is so prejudicial to fable as an air of restraint, or parade, as it always puts the reader upon his guard against the attempted insinuation.

La Fontaine, indeed, in some few of his fables, ventures now and then at a bold flight, but it is only when his characters are of a noble and exalted rank. And in this case, the elevation of the stile does no prejudice to the simplicity of it, which is ever found to agree perfectly well with true dignity.

The familiar stile in fable should be a collection of whatever is most delicate and refined in common conversation. La Fontaine is the best model we can copy after in this respect.

The sprightly stile is known by being the very reverse to the serious and mournful, as is the pleasing to the disagreeable and harsh stile.

The sprightly or humorous stile in fable consists in bestowing such appellations and qualities on animals, as only properly belong to men. Thus Saint Renard is put for an hypocritical fox,

fox, the fair plum'd Helen, for a fine hen; the Nestor of the plain, for an old and experienced steed; with many others of this kind to be met with in the writings of fabulists. It is produced, likewise, by a comparison of small things, with great, and by measuring, affecting and interesting incidents, by the most trivial and insignificant; so that the whole together forms a kind of grotesque. Thus,

Deux cocqs vivoient en paix : une poule survint,  
Et voilà la guerre allumée. Amour, tu perdis Troie!

LA FONT.

Not louder cries, when Ilium was in flames,  
Were sent to heaven by woeful Trojan dames;  
When Pyrrhus tofs'd on high his burnish'd blade,  
And offer'd Priam to his father's shade,  
Then for the cock the widow'd poultry made. }

Dryd. Cock and Fox.

Sometimes it lies in the use of circumlocution, which produces some image. As in speaking of a boar, whom it was very difficult to kill; one author says,

La Parque & ses ciseaux

Avec peine y mordoient.

LA FONT.

And another thus of the harpies; (which seems much the same thought under another image.)

And from their plumes, the shining sword rebounds.

DRYDEN.

The pleasing or graceful stile commonly shews itself in those descriptions, which are from time

to

to time thrown into the body of the narration : and it consists chiefly in representing things agreeable in themselves, with all the additional graces they are capable of receiving.

Ce breuvagé vanté par le peuple rimeur,  
Ce nectar que l'on sert au maître du tonnerre,  
Et dont nous enivrons tous les Dieux de la terre :  
C'est la louange.

LA FONT.

Oft thro' her native lawns she stray'd,  
And wrestling with the lambkins play'd ;  
Her looks diffusive sweets bequeath'd,  
The breeze grew purer as she breath'd ;  
The morn her radiant blush assum'd,  
The spring with earlier fragrance bloom'd ;  
White was the robe this maiden wore,  
And Chastity the name she bore.

MOORE'S FAB.

The natural is the very opposite to the far-fetched or laboured stile, as the simple or sentimental is to the studied or pompous. Thus the milk-maid argues with herself, in the simplicity of her heart.

Il m'est, disoit-elle, facile  
D'élever des poulets autour de ma maison ;

Le renard sera bien habile

S'il ne m'en laisse assez pour avoir un cochon.

Le porc à l'engraisser coutera peu de son ;

Il étoit quand je l'eus, de grosseur raisonnable,

J'aurai, le revendant, de l'argent bel & bon ;

Et qui m'empêchera de mettre en notre étable,

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Vu le prix dont il est, une vache & son veau,  
 Que je verrai sauter au milieu du troupeau ?  
 Perrette là-dessus saute aussi transportée,  
 Le lait tombe, adieu vieu, vache, cochon, couvée.

LA FONT.

Ease and simplicity of stile consists in the choice of certain sweet and smooth expressions, that rather seem to rise of themselves, than to be the effects of choice or study ; in accidental constructions, and old terms new drest, but, which still preserve the air of antiquity, La Fontaine indisputably bears the palm in this part of fable. He had a natural taste for this kind of writing ; which he greatly improved, by a close application to the study of our old French authors, whose nature, plainness, and simplicity of stile, are truly admirable.

## CH A P. II.

The origin of fable.

**T**HERE is no determining the exact time when fables first came in use. We find a statesman, (a) a philosopher, (b) and a prophet, (c) employing them almost at one and the same time. At Rome, to calm a mutiny of the people ; in Asia, to instruct cities and kings ; and at Jerusalem, to convince David of the crime he had committed.

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(a) Menenius Agrippa, in his fable of the body and members.  
 (b) Æsop the Phrygian. (c) Nathan, in his parable of the poor man and his kid.

mitted. Now seeing that different men made use of this method of instruction, in different parts of the world, and without any previous knowledge of or communication with each other; it is highly probable, that fables were in use long before we hear of them, and that mankind received their first ideas of them from nature herself.

In the infancy of learning, men being but poorly provided with the means of expression, in a language, as yet, but newly formed, found themselves greatly at a loss to convey, in a direct and clear manner, their wants and necessities to each other, and therefore had recourse, as often as they could, to the use of some image or comparison which might speak for them, and so ease them at once of the trouble of elocution. Now comparison is a kind of allegory, and allegory and fable are the same thing.

Necessity, and the indigence of words then, first gave occasion to the use of allegory; a little reflection soon taught those of a clearer discernment than the rest, that considerable advantages might be drawn from what indigence had been the cause of inventing; and they easily perceived, that this manner of representation might serve two purposes, wholly different from each other; namely, to develop an idea, and render it more obvious and intelligible, when not sufficiently so of itself; or to envelop and conceal it, when too strong and palpable.

There was a time when the ideas of virtue and vice were not so clear as they are at present. The itch of possession, so natural to mankind, had doubled the veil that concealed them; and there were ignorance and self-interest at once to combat; to succeed in this, it was necessary to employ strokes, and of so strong a nature, as could not fail of striking the dullest observation, or rousing the most lumpish soul. The best method to effect this, was to demonstrate every important truth, meant to be inculcated by a short and clear example. Such, as by making a forcible impression on the imagination, might be able at once to convince and persuade. But whence were these examples to be taken? from social life? we are apt to suspect examples drawn from our own sphere. When the question lies between our neighbour and ourselves, self-interest always steps in, and shews us the false side of it. Were they to be taken from history? this is liable to the same objections as the foregoing; for mankind, and their different tastes, are concerned here likewise: one shall extol Alexander as an hero, whilst a second shall detest him as a public robber. The shortest way, then, was to chuse examples from amongst animals. These have some kind of resemblance with ourselves. If to these are lent the gifts of speech and reason, we shall hearken to them without partiality, for they are not men like ourselves. And as they will judge of us in an dispassionate manner, we shall quietly and calmly yield to their decision,

decision. In this manner is mankind to be humoured, and, as it were, cheated into its own good. The artifice is shallow enough, yet we suffer ourselves to be caught by it, even in this enlightened age, when improvements of all kinds are carried to such a height.

*Le monde est vieux, dit-on. Je le crois :*

*Cependant*

*Il le faut amuser encor comme un enfant.*

The world grows old, 'tis said, and I agree ;

But, like a child, it still must humour'd be.

The sages of antiquity were doubtless sensible of this. For they had employed the same lure many and many a time, long before Esop. But as he was the first who publicly professed this method of philosophizing, he gave his name to this kind of instruction, which presents truth under the disguise of allegories.

### CHAP. III.

Characters of the most celebrated fabulists among the antients.

#### ESOP.

**E**SOP, the Phrygian, was born and lived in a state of slavery : those who have given us his history, have taken great pains to exaggerate the deformity of his body, in the view, perhaps, of enhancing his merit, and throwing a new lustre on the graces of his mind and understanding. He first rendered himself conspicuous by the vivacity and fire of his repartees ; but to this keen-



ness of imagination he joined a sublime sense, that soon acquired him the admiration of all Asia. His reputation was spread throughout Persia, Egypt, and many other kingdoms of the east; where the greatest princes were ambitious to have the honour of entertaining him at their courts; and strove who should contribute the most to his pleasure and convenience. After having spent some years at the courts of different monarchs, he was desirous to shew himself once more in his own country; but, notwithstanding his great reputation, and the honour he had done to all Greece, the inhabitants of Delphos gave him but an indifferent reception. He was so piqued at this, that he wrote his fable of the floating twigs against them, which, at a distance, appear to be something of consequence; but, on coming near them, prove to be nothing. The Delphians, in revenge for this, accused him of having carried off some of the holy vessels; and, in spite of all his wit, wisdom, and the glory he had gained, he was cast from the top of a rock into the sea. A pyramid was erected to his memory indeed, after his death, by way of amends.

The vivacity of his character shines forth in his fables. He ever seems to content himself with making his stile clear and intelligible, without being at the pains of those little decorations which the richness of his invention could easily have furnished him with; not that he overlooked or despised these ornamental parts of the work, (as has been asserted by a great genius) but because

he preferred strength and clearness to ornament and parade. He would have the truth he represents sufficiently bright of itself, to strike even the least attentive; and indeed, in the few remaining fables we have of his, we remark such strong and solid sense, that even, in these days, when we sacrifice every thing to wit and brilliancy of style, we have a secret pleasure in yielding him the ascendancy, if we once give ourselves the time and trouble to study him with attention. And certainly we should do so: the greatest philosophers point us out the example. Socrates, the night before his death, employed himself not only in reading his fables, but in rendering them into verse. Shall we blush to imitate the greatest man of antiquity, in the very moments which so fixed his glory, and transmitted it to posterity?

Aristotle (*a*) mentions him, speaking in public to the Samians, upon the occasion of their demagogue, or prime minister, being impeached for plundering the common-wealth: in which oration he makes him insert the fable of the fox, and the hedge-hog, with which we shall present readers, as a specimen of the author's taste, and nervous manner of conveying instruction.

#### The Fox and the Hedge-hog.

“A fox was swimming cross a river, and  
 “when he came to the other side, he found the  
 “bank so slippery and steep, that he could not  
 L 4 “get

“ get up it. While he stood in the water de-  
 “ liberating what to do, he was attacked by a  
 “ swarm of flies, who, settling upon his head and  
 “ eyes, stung him grievously. A hedge-hog, who  
 “ stood upon the shore, pitying his condition,  
 “ offered to drive the flies which so tormented  
 “ him. Thank you, friend, said the fox, but  
 “ pray do not disturb these honest blood-suckers,  
 “ that are now quartered on me; and whose  
 “ bellies are, I fancy, pretty well filled; for if  
 “ they should leave me, a fresh swarm would  
 “ take their places, and I should not have a drop  
 “ of blood left in my whole body.”

If we recollect the definition given of the a-  
 pologue or fable, at the beginning of this arti-  
 cle, we shall find it is the relation of an allego-  
 rical action. In this we have them all, narration,  
 action, allegory.

We are told what passed between the two cha-  
 racters of the piece: their conversation is related  
 as by an historian; yet we see only Esop himself.

The action, is the foxes refusing to accept the  
 assistance offered him by his friend, the hedge-  
 hog. He falls into the ditch, where he is tor-  
 mented by flies, this is the beginning of the ac-  
 tion; the hedge-hog offers to deliver him from  
 his sufferings, this is the middle; the fox re-  
 fuses his offer, for reasons he gives him, this is  
 the end of the action. If we take away the first  
 of these three parts, the narration would be with-  
 out an head; if the last, it would seem to hang  
 in

in suspense. But it must set out, go on, and arrive at its end; or, which is the same thing, there must be the undertaking, conducting, and finishing the enterprize.

The allegory is very plain; the fox represents the common people vexed and oppressed by their governors, who are here described under the characters of flies. The hedge-hog is the person who takes upon him to accuse these magistrates, and bring them to justice if possible. The fox is unhappy and uneasy in his present situation, but he is wise and considerate in his misfortunes. The hedge-hog is here made the emblem of accusers or informers, rather than any other creature, because he appears, likely from the sharpness of his quills, to wound in attempting to cure; a character too justly applicable to many accusers in the like case, who only seek a change of masters and government, that they may have an opportunity of ruling in their turn, often with a superior degree of cruelty and oppression.

But there is yet a greater strength and fulness of allegory in the following fable of his, preserved and handed down to us by Plutarch.

#### The Mule.

“ A mule happening to see his figure in a  
“ stream, was struck with admiration at the beauty and gracefulness of his shape; and tossing  
“ his mane with a high degree of pleasure and  
“ complacency, he sets out upon full gallop in  
“ imitation



“ imitation of the horse ; but all on a sudden,  
 “ calling to mind that he was but the offspring  
 “ of an ass, he stopt short, divested in an instant  
 “ of all his presumption and pride.”

In this piece the author appears to know no medium, between the necessary and the superfluous. He saw he could reach the goal at one step, and accordingly he has taken but one step. What fire, what vivacity in this picture of a man, born with a greatness of soul, above the meanness of his condition ! as conscious of his own abilities, he dares attempt every thing ; but when he comes to reflect on his original, and that mankind are ever ready to give more to birth than real merit, he finds all his courage fail him. There is not a single stroke in this fable, that does not carry the clearest meaning with it.

#### PHÆDRUS.

Simple nature, as we have already seen, composes the character of Esop's fables. As a rigid philosopher, he disdained every thing but strength and truth. Phædrus, a freed man of Augustus, thought this species of writing susceptible of several graces and embellishments. In reading the Grecian sage we forgot his person, and are only attentive to what he inculcates. But when we peruse the latin fabulist, we cannot help thinking, that he was the man of wit, delicacy, and politeness ; and that he studied to appear such. He does not content himself with simply relating facts, he paints them to us in the most lively manner,

manner, and that often by one stroke of his pencil. His expressions are chosen, his thoughts just, and his versification finished. Would one think it possible, that so perfect a work should have been forgotten at Rome, even in Seneca's time, which was at most but fifty years after his death? It remained thus buried in oblivion till the sixteenth century, when Francis Pithou brought it again to light from the library of St. Remi of Rheims. The instant it made its appearance, all those who had a true taste for antiquity, immediately found in it the marks of the Augustan age, and repaid with usury those honours of which it had been so long deprived.

His fable of the wolf and the lamb is amongst the most celebrated of antiquity. Though it has been so repeatedly read, yet we shall venture to present it to the reader once more, without the least apprehension of disgusting him by the repetition.

*The Wolf and the Lamb.*

" A wolf and a lamb, both urged by thirst,  
 " came to drink at the same stream. The wolf  
 " stood pretty high up the stream, and the lamb  
 " down much lower. When the son of rapine,  
 " finding his appetite grow ravenous, cast about

*Lupus & Agnus.*

Ad rivum eundem lupus & agnus venerant  
 Siti compulsi: superior stabat lupus,  
 Longeque inferior agnus: tunc sauce improba  
 Latro incitatus, jurgii causam intulit:

“ for an occasion of quarrel. Sirrah, says he,  
 “ what is the reason you disturb the stream  
 “ while I am drinking? The poor fleecy inno-  
 “ cent, trembling with fear, replied, how is it  
 “ possible, sir, I should do what you accuse me  
 “ of, since the stream runs from you to me?  
 “ The wolf, confounded at this home-truth;  
 “ sirrah, cries he, you slandered me six months  
 “ ago! Dear, sir, says the lamb, I was not  
 “ born at that time. Zounds! then your fa-  
 “ ther did; and, so saying, he flew upon him,  
 “ and, in his lawless rage, put him to death.”

This fable is one of the most beautiful and  
 most esteemed of any among the ancients. Every  
 thing is clear, and strongly pointed. The scene  
 of action; the bank of a rivulet: the actors,  
 two; a wolf and a lamb: their characters; those  
 of innocence and oppression: the action; the  
 dispute arising between them: the intrigue: by  
 which the reader is held in suspense; the manner  
 in which this quarrel is to end: the unravelling

---

Cur, inquit, turbulentam fecisti mihi  
 Istam bibenti? Laniger contra timens,  
 Qui possum, quæso, facere quod quereris, lupe?  
 A te decurrit ad meos haustus liquor:  
 Repulsus ille veritatis viribus,  
 Ante hos sex menses malè, ait, dixisti mihi,  
 Respondit agnus: Equidem natus non eram.  
 Pater Hercule tuus, inquit, maledixit mihi.  
 Atque ita correptum lacerat injusta nece.

or catastrophe is by the death of the innocent person : from whence arises the moral, that the weak are often oppressed by the stronger.

Ad rivum eundem . . . venerant siti compulsi.

Accident might have brought them hither, but it was better to give each a motive. The story has, by this means, more the air of probability.

The wolf stood high up the stream, and the lamb much lower down.

On this situation depends a part of the character of the action. Had the lamb been placed where the wolf is, the complaint of the latter would have carried somewhat of justice in it.

What is the reason you trouble the stream, &c.

In the original Latin, *Istam* points out strongly the particular part of the water then before the wolf, and consequently renders the injustice of the accusation more obvious: *mibi bibenti*, an expression full of arrogance and pride. We in a manner hear the tone of voice it was delivered in.

The fleecy innocent trembling with fear.

The epithet *Laniger* made use of here, and which signifies the wool-bearer, admirably well expresses the mild and gentle disposition of the lamb ; as that of *latro* the assassin, made use of by the author two verses before, does the black and villainous



lainous intentions of the wolf. These two words, thus drawn from the very circumstance of the action appear with double merit; first, as being highly picturesque; secondly, as preventing the repetition of proper names.

How is it possible I should do what you accuse me of?

Circumlocution is employed here, as being more respectful, than to have said in plain terms, how can I trouble your part of the water? this would have appeared too bold for the meek lamb. The wolf takes him up sharply, by saying, *Ante hos sex menses, &c.* You slandered me six months ago. To which the poor lamb makes that short but strong reply, *Equidem natus non eram*, I really was not born at that time. This reply would have lost half its force and energy had it been longer, or more complex. The wolf, stung to the quick with so unanswerable a reply, breaks forth into a passion: and raising his voice, swears a great oath, and, without waiting any farther reply, falls upon his defenceless prey.

The reader may, if he pleases, amuse himself with comparing this piece with the following one of La Fontaine's on the same subject, with which we here present him.

#### Le Loup & l'Agneau.

Un agneau se defalteroit

Dans le courant d'une onde pure.

Un loup survient à jeun qui cherchoit aventure,

Et que la faim en ces lieux attiroit.

Qui

Qui te rend si hardi de troubler mon breuvage ?

Dit cet animal plein de rage ;

Tu seras chatié de ta témérité.

Sire, répond l'agneau, que votre majesté

Ne se mette pas en colère ;

Mais plutot qu'elle considère

Que je me vais desalterant

Dans le courant,

Plus de vingt pas au-dessous d'elle ;

Et que, par conséquent, en aucune façon

Je ne puis troubler sa boisson.

Tu la troubles, reprit cette bête cruelle,

Et je fais que de moi tu médies l'an passé.

Comment l'aurois-je fait si je n'étois pas né ?

Reprit l'agneau ; je t'éte encor ma mere.

Si ce n'est toi, c'est donc ton frere.

Je n'en ai point. C'est donc quelqu'un des tiens ;

Car vous ne m'épargnez guère,

Vous, vos bergers & vos chiens.

On me l'a dit : il faut que je me venge.

Là-dessus au fond des forêts

Le loup l'emporte, & puis le mange,

Sans autre forme de procès.

La Fontaine has, every where through his whole fable, closely copied Phædrus. Indeed, he has excelled him in some places, but then in others again he falls short of him. Each has painted the characters of the wolf and the lamb, in the most interesting manner. The lamb in Phædrus is more timid and fearful. In La Fontaine it is meeker and more respectful: for it never addresses the wolf, but in the third person:

Que

Que votre majesté  
Ne se mette point en colere.

The following verse, in the French poet, tho' very natural and expressive;

Comment l'aurois-je fait si je n'étois pas né ?  
Je tête encor ma mere,

does not come near the noble and energetic simplicity of the Latin, *Equidem natus non eram*; I was not so much as born. The French fable is interspersed with a number of very lively and pleasing expressions. The stream is called *le courant d'une onde pure*. This paraphrase produces an agreeable image;

Sire, que votre majesté, &c.

is sprightly and smooth. *Tu la troubles*; is a reply full of surliness and ill nature.

Vous ne m'épargnez guere,  
Vous, vos bergers, vos chiens.

This quick enumeration very well marks the anger of a man who knows himself in the wrong, and cannot bear to be answered: *Iræ hoc aciores quo iniquæ*, says Tacitus.

Suppose we attempt the same comparison in another subject.

The

## The Fox and the Stork.

" The fox is said to have invited the stork to  
 " supper, and when he came to the appoint-  
 " ment, set before him a mess of pottage, in a  
 " large wide earthen pan; so that the poor stork,  
 " when he attempted to eat, could not take up  
 " any at all. However, he invited the fox in  
 " return to take a dinner with him; and,  
 " when he came, brought in the victuals in a  
 " pitcher with a long and narrow neck; into  
 " which he could easily thrust his own long bill,  
 " and fill his belly at pleasure, while his guest,  
 " who was just ready to starve with hunger, was  
 " forced to content himself with licking the out-  
 " side of the pitcher, when the stork is said to  
 " have made him this just reproof. Every one  
 " should be content to bear the same treatment  
 " which they give to others."

The fox, in the fable before us, having made the first advances, renders the affront offered the

## Vulpis &amp; Ciconia.

Vulpes ad cœnam dicitur Ciconiam  
 Prior invitasse, & illi in patina liquidam  
 Posuisse sorbitionem, quam nullo modo  
 Gustare esuriens potuerit Ciconia.  
 Quæ vulpem quum revocasset, intrito cibo  
 Plenam lagenam posuit: huic rostrum inferens  
 Satiatur ipsa: & torquet convivam fame:  
 Quæ quum lagenæ frustra collum lamberet:  
 Peregrinam sic locutam volucrem accepimus:  
 Sua quisque exempla debet æquo animo pati.

stork,



stork, the more sensible; who cannot by all the means she puts in use, get a single taste of the dish set before her.

*Nulla modo gustare esuriens potuit.*

*Satiatur ipsa, & torquet convivam fame.*

The two verbs, made use of here, are both of them equally strong and significant; the one marks the plenty enjoyed by the stork, *satiatur*; and the other, the wretched situation of the fox, who is perishing with hunger, in the view of abundance, *torquet*. He is represented licking the neck of the pitcher: this is a very striking attitude, when compared with the ease and plenty with which the other regales herself.

The story seems told in a more sprightly manner by La Fontaine; and the character of the fox seems kept up with a stronger spirit from the beginning to the end. Of this, however, we will leave the reader to judge for himself.

#### Le Renard & la Cicogne.

Compere le renard se mit un jour en frals,  
Et retint à diner commere la Cicogne.

Le régal fut petit, & sans beaucoup d'appêts:

Le galant pour toute besogne

Avoit un brouet clair: il vivoit chichement.

Ce brouet fut par lui servi sur une assiette:

La Cicogne à long bec n'en put attraper miette;

Et le drôle eut lappé le tout en un moment.

Pour se venger de cette tromperie,

A quelque tems delà la Cicogne le prie.

Volontiers, lui dit-il, car avec mes amis

Je ne fais point cérémonie.

A l'heure dite il court au logis

De la Cicogne son hôteſſe,

Loua très-fort la politeſſe.

Trouva le diner cuit à point.

Bon appétit ſur-tout: Renards n'en manquent point.

Il ſe réjouifſoit à l'odeur de la viande.

Miſe en menus morceaux, & qu'il croyoit friande.

On ſervit pour l'embarraffer

En un vaſe à long col, & d'étroite embouchure.

Le bec de la Cicogne y pouvoit bien paſſer :

Mais le muſeau du ſire étoit d'autre meſure :

Il lui fallut à jeun retourner au logis,

Honteux comme un renard qu'une poule auroit pris,

Serrant la queue, & portant bas l'oreille.

Trompeurs, c'eſt pour vous que j'écris,

Attendez-vous à la pareille.

*Se mettre en frais*, is very expreſſive of a glutton, or of a miſerable wretch, who ſeldom cares to give away any thing, *Et le drôle eut lappé le tout en un moment*. This verſe is very fine, every thing in it being ſtrong and expreſſive. How differently would it have appeared, if the author had ſaid, *Le renard eut mangé le tout en inſtant*, *En un moment* expreſſes, by its rapidity, the greedineſs of the fox.

Mais le muſeau du ſire étoit d'autre meſure.

forms an agreeable paraphraſe, which ſounds much better than plainly ſaying, *Son muſeau étoit trop gros*, the term *ſire* is pretty irony.

Nothing can better paint the ſhame of a perſon, who falls into the trap of his own deceit, than theſe two verſes:

Honteux

Honteux comme un renard qu'une poule auroit pris,  
Serrant la queue, & portant bas l'oreille.

We shall limit ourselves to these two specimens of Phædrus, as being sufficient to furnish an idea of the taste of the author, and his particular manner of handling this subject. With the conciseness of Esop, he is not less elegant than La Fontaine; nay, he may appear more so from the conciseness of his writings. But the chief excellence of this author, and which places him in the rank even of the greatest poets, is, the true poetic turn of his stile, and the artful harmony of his versification. This has doubtless been already perceived by the reader, in the few passages we have cited; and he will be more fully convinced of it by these which follow.

When grandeur or loftiness is to be described, we find it in the very pace of his verse: his proud mule strides on with large steps, and makes all around ring with the noise of his bells.

*Ille onere dives, celsâ cervice eminens,  
Clarumque collo jactat tintinnabulum.*

While his humble companion follows with a slow and silent pace:

*Comes quieto sequitur, & placido gradu*

On a sudden, the robbers rush from their ambush, and fall upon our two travellers:

*Subito latrones ex insidiis advolant.*

What

What art and variety appear in this picture! At first, we hear the noise and bustle made by the proud mule, who is loaded with the money; to this succeeds the quiet and modest deportment of his companion; which produces a kind of pause, or rest, in the numbers. Presently, the robbers rush out upon them, then the movement becomes more quick: *ex insidiis advolant*. What a number of ideas are contained in these three words!

He shews the same magnificence and art when he is to paint the amaze and terror of the watery republic, in the fable of the frogs wanting a king:

*Fortè una tacite profert e stagno caput.*

One among the rest accidentally lifts up his head with great precaution, and, after having discovered what sort of a thing their new king was, calls to the rest of his companions, who had hidden themselves among the leaves and grass in the pond:

*Et explorato rege, cunctas evocat.*

*Explorare*, properly signifies, to go on the discovery of any country. The expression is singular. It was a king just fallen down from heaven amongst them, and who, to judge of him by the great noise and bustle he made in his fall, should have been some terrible person. And now the frogs crowd who shall be foremost to survey him.

*Illæ timore posito certatim adnatant.*

*Adnatant,*



*Adnatant*, is a very rich expression, or, in other words, an expression which paints a number of different things at once. As the motion, the end to which it tends, the manner in which it is done, and even the element in which the movers are; add to all these the adverb *certatim*, which points out the haste and eagerness of this small people, and you will have a perfect and finished picture.

After Phædrus, we find few or no authors shine in the fable-composition. About the end of the fourth century, Avienus attempted it in elegiac verse, but the choice of his verse is alone sufficient to give us an indifferent opinion of his taste as a poet; accordingly he has neither the exactness of the Greek fabulist, nor the elegance of the Latin one.

In the fourteenth century, Planudes, a monk of Constantinople, published a collection of fables in Greek, under the name of Esop. They appear to have a great deal of the character of his stile and taste, if we judge of them by those which Aristotle and Plutarch have handed down to us: but these performances would not have been able to keep up the reputation of the apologue, had not Phædrus arose with all his beauties; or had not La Fontaine shewn us this way of writing in the highest degree of perfection. The simplicity of Esop was by some thought too dull and dry; and the elegance of Phædrus to want that easy smoothness, and engaging tenderness,

derness, which at once tickles us and fixes our attention. To make up these deficiencies then, it was necessary that some one should be formed expressly by nature, and with a genius at the same time capable of shewing us the apologue, at once simple, elegant, and easy.

## C H A P. IV.

Characters of the chief fabulists among the moderns.

## FRENCH FABULISTS.

## LA FONTAINE.

**T**HIS author was born at Chateau-Thierry, a small town in the province of Champagne. "Never was man, says Abbé d'Olivet, more plain and natural in his manners, but then it was that ingenuous simplicity we so admire in those of a tender age. I think I may go farther, and say, his whole life was a state of childhood. Children are innocent, credulous, easily wrought on, without ambition, and without gall; unaffected by riches, and incapable of remaining long attach'd to one object; curious of nothing but pleasure, or rather of amusement; and directed in their way of life by a kind of twilight, which serves to shew them, though in a partial manner, the law of nature. This is in every respect the true character of La Fontaine."

If there is truth in the maxim, that an author is to be known by his works; we shall now  
be

be pretty well able to judge of the works of our fabulist, by the portrait here drawn of him ; his writings flowed all from the abundance of his heart. It was taste, and taste alone (of which he possessed an exquisite one) guided his pen : and he always went on right, without knowing the reason of it. He adapted himself with a surprising facility to all subjects, and when once his imagination was struck with any one, he had instantly perceived, in the clearest manner, every interesting stroke it would admit of, and all the colours of nature waited on his pencil.

“ Incapable, as he himself tells us, of imitating Phædrus in the elegance and conciseness of his stile, he thought it necessary, by way of amends, to throw a greater life and spirit into the work, than he had done. All the world knows how he has succeeded. However, he did not think himself equal to Phædrus. Was this through stupidity (*Bêtise*) as a modern writer somewhat singularly expresses himself? I can hardly think it. He must certainly be sensible, that his fables had more gaiety and life in them, than those of Phædrus ; but then surely, it was not for him to determine whether this gaiety was of equal value and merit with the elegance of the Latin author.”

In all likelihood La Fontaine has carried fable to its pinnacle of perfection ; those who have attempted to surpass him, have not been able to  
equal

equal him, though with the greatest talents. The least of his fables have a certain turn, which will ever be the opprobrium of those, who are not born like him with a genius for this kind of writing. What an irreparable loss would it have been to the French Literature, had this singular genius been influenced by the authority of one of our greatest masters in eloquence (*Patru*) who pretended that fables could never make any figure in the French language!

*Periculosum est credere & non credere.*

PHÆD. FAB.

Our poet placed, in the rank of his best fables, that of the oak and the reed. Before we enter upon an investigation of this piece, let us try what ideas pure nature would furnish us with, on such a subject. Let us take the lead, and see if the author has followed the same track with ourselves.

As soon as we hear of the oak and the reed, we are struck with the contrast of small and great, of strength and weakness. This is the first idea, that arises from the very title of the subject. And we should be very much displeased, to find it destroyed by seeing strength and greatness given to the reed, and the oak be made small and weak; in this case we should not hesitate to vindicate the rights of nature, and to declare that she had been falsely painted, and badly imitated.



We next suppose these two talking to each other; this supposition granted, we readily conceive, that the oak should speak in a tone of confidence and superiority, and the reed with modesty and simplicity; this is required by nature. But as it generally happens, that such as affect this loftiness and arrogance of stile are for the most part fools; and that reason is on the side of the humble and modest, we shall not therefore be surprized to see the pride of the oak receive a fall, and the modest reed remain unhurt. But this idea is wrapt up in the circumstances of an event, which we do not yet conceive. Let us then see how the author will unfold this, he will do all the rest for us, and better than we can ourselves.

Le Chêne un jour dit au Roseau :

Vous avez bien sujet d'accuser la nature.

The discourse here is direct; it is not said, the oak told the reed he had great reason to complain of nature . . . but you have . . . *vous avez* . . . This is a much more lively and expressive manner; we imagine we hear the actors speaking, and the dialogue becomes wholly dramatic. Moreover, the second verse gives the proposition of the subject, and indicates the strain of the whole dialogue. The oak seems already to express a feeling and compassion, but of that haughty kind, which only serves to denote the conscious superiority the speaker has over the wretch he is talking to.

Vous

Vous avez bien sujet d'accuser la nature.  
Un roitelet pour vous est un pesant fardeau.

The idea of the weakness of the reed is here very lively expressed by the oak, and carries with it an air of insult. The smallest bird that is, says he, is a weight too great for you.

Le moindre vent qui d'avanture  
Fait rider la face de l'eau,  
Vous oblige à baisser la tête.

This is the same thought over again, only presented under a different image. The oak reasons wholly by comparison, which is the striking manner of reasoning, as it impresses the imagination and mind at the same time. *D'avanture* is an antique term, and from its simplicity very poetical in this way. *Rider la face de l'eau*, Curl the surface of the water; is at once a pleasing and a very just image.

These three verses run off very smoothly, and the oak seems to stoop to this tone of gentleness, out of pity to the other. But we shall soon find him talk in a different strain, when he comes to speak of himself: let us hear him.

Cependant que mon front au Caucase pareil,  
Non content d'arrêter les rayons du soleil,  
Brave l'effort de la tempête.

What noble imagery is here! what pomp of expression! what lofty turns! these verses, wherein the harmony is strong and full, and the ideas grand and noble, form a fine contrast with the

three preceding ones, where the harmony and imagery are equally soft and smooth.

Tout vous est aquilon, tout me semble zéphir.

We have the oak now returning to the parallel, so agreeable to his own self-love; to render which still more sensible, he confines it to a few words. The same word that to me is but a gentle breeze, is to you a storm. The contrast is every where kept up, even in the harmony of the numbers, *tout me semble zéphir*, is much softer than *tout vous est aquilon*. Besides, what strength is there not in the expression from its conciseness! but to proceed.

Encor si vous naissiez à l'abri du feuillage

Dont je couvre le voisinage,

Vous n'auriez pas tant à souffrir,

Je vous défendrais de l'orage.

The pride of the oak is now fully satisfied, let us even suppose him to have been a little ashamed; he returns then to his first compassionate tone, by way of dextrously engaging the reed to assent to the praises he has been giving himself, and to flatter his vanity by a sorrowful acknowledgment of its own weakness. But, notwithstanding this affected tone of compassion, he always takes care to speak of himself in the most advantageous terms: and takes no small pride in declaring how he would have sheltered and protected his poor feeble neighbour, had this latter been luckily placed a little nearer to him, and more under the

the shadow of his extensive branches. By this means he sufficiently points out his own superiority:

*Mais vous naîsez le plus souvent,  
Sur les humides bords des royaumes du vent.*

The turn of this last verse is entirely poetical, and does not ill suit the mouth of the oak :

*La nature envers vous me semble bien injuste.*

This is the conclusion of his speech, doubtless, pronounced with an air of no small consequence, and with an insulting pity, even if it was real. We now wait with impatience for the reed's reply. Could we put one into his mouth, it would doubtless be a spirited one. The author, well skilled in the passions, will easily satisfy our expectations. The reed's answer will be polite, but severe ; and we shall not be surprized at it.

*Votre compassion, lui repondit l'arbuſte  
Part d'un bon naturel.*

This is a strong irony. The reed would not tell him, that his pretended compassion proceeded from pride ; but contents itself with giving him to understand, that it had been sufficiently examined, and seen into the true cause of it, and left the oak to comprehend the rest. The remaining part of this answer is severe, and even somewhat menacing :



Mais quittez ce fouci,  
 Le vents me sont moins qu'à vous redoutables,  
 Je plie & ne romps pas. Vous avez jusqu'ici  
 Contre leurs coups épouvantables  
 Résisté sans courber le dos;  
 Mais attendons la fin.

Although this discourse is not long, it is very emphatical.

The actors, in this little piece, have now no more to say, and it remains with the poet to compleat the story. He now takes upon himself the stile of narration, and gives us the description of a storm:

Comme il disoit ces mots  
 Du bout de l'horison accourt avec furie,  
 Le plus terrible des enfans;  
 Que le nord eut porté jusque là dans les flancs.

Instead of simply saying, the *north-wind*, the poet personifies it, and, by using a periphrasis, adds a force and dignity to the idea, and gives a greater scope to the harmony:

L'arbre tient bon, le roseau plie.

We now behold our two actors in an equal situation:

Le vent redouble ses efforts,  
 Et fait si bien, qu'il deracine:  
 Celui de qui la tête étoit au ciel voisine,  
 Et dont les pieds touchoient à l'empire des morts.

These

These lines are truly beautiful and noble : the antithesis and hyperbole, which run through the two last, make them even sublime.

The poet has, as we see, exactly followed the ideas which naturally arise from the subject. In this consists the truth of his narration. But he has likewise cloathed his truths with all the ornaments they could with propriety receive. This constitutes the beauty of the narration. His thoughts, expressions and turns are all in a perfect accord with the subject. These several parts are judiciously matched and connected, interiorly by the order and regular succession of the thoughts, exteriorly by the form of the stile; and present us, by this means, with a picture of the art, in which every thing appears just and graceful. Add to this, the sentiment which reigns throughout the whole, and animates it from one end to the other; and this piece will be found to have every thing that is requisite to render it truly perfect.

The fable of the old man and the three young ones; the subject of which approaches nearer to ourselves, as being a picture of human kind, is if any thing more striking than the foregoing. The poet, sensible of the beauty of his subject, has lavished on it all the art and genius he was possessed of. And, perhaps, there is not a more finished piece in the circle of French literature.

## Le Vieillard &amp; les trois Jeunes Hommes.

Un octogenaire plantoit.

Passé encor de bâtir ; mais planter à cet âge !

Disoient trois jouvenceaux, enfans du voisinage ;

Affurément il radotoit.

We shall hardly any where meet with an exordium more simple, lively, concise and rich than this ; or, where the turns are more strong and sprightly :

Car au nom des dieux, je vous prie,

Quel fruit de ce labour pouvez-vous recueillir ?

Autant qu'un patriarche il vous faudroit vieillir.

A quoi bon charger votre vie

Des soins d'un avenir qui n'est point fait pour vous ?

Ne songez désormais qu'à vos fautes passées ;

Quittez le long espoir & les vastes pensées :

Tout cela ne convient qu'à nous.

The pertness, natural to youth, is admirably well painted in this speech. The youngsters begin in an insulting manner ; *songez à vos fautes, quittez le long espoir & les vastes pensées.* How rich, and full of harmony is this verse ! and what a field of ideas does it open to the reader. *Tout cela ne convient qu'à nous.* This is the very tone of the oak.

Il ne convient pas à vous-mêmes,

Repartit le vieillard. Tout établissement

Vient tard, & dure peu. La main des parques blêmes

De vos jours & des miens se joue également.

So excellent and important a maxim could not be better placed, than in the mouth of an old man,

of

of long and consummate experience. The epithet *blêmes* (pale) is strong imagery. It is the *pallida mors* of Horace, whom the poet has imitated, in the rest of his thought, enlivening it at the same time with a new turn of his own. Horace says;

Pale death strikes with an equal blow,  
The monarch's throne and beggar's cot;

La Fontaine says, the pale fates sport equally with the lives of the young and old.

Est-il aucun moment  
Qui vous puisse assurer d'un second seulement?

This is true philosophical reasoning, and very strongly urged; the word *seulement*, placed at the end of the verse, has a very good effect:

Mes arrière-neveux me devront cet ombrage.  
He bien! défendez-vous au sage  
De se donner des soins pour le plaisir d'autrui?  
Cela même est un fruit que je goûte aujourd'hui:  
J'en puis jouir demain, & quelques jours encore.

Nothing can be more noble than this sentiment. Had our forefathers laboured only for themselves, what should we have to enjoy at present? every man, say the philosophers, should look upon himself, while in this life, as a soldier on his post, and employ himself in the service of the public, till the time comes for him to be relieved.

Je puis enfin compter l'aurore  
Plus d'une fois sur vos tombeaux.



This poetical turn gives a pleasing air to a thought, otherwise sad and mournful :

Le vieillard eut raison. L'un des trois jouvenceaux  
Se noya dès le port, allant à l'Amerique.  
L'autre afin de monter aux grandes dignités  
Dans les emplois de Mars servant la république,  
Par un coup imprévu vit ses jours emportés.  
Le troisiéme tomba d'un arbre  
Que lui-meme vouloit enter :  
Et pleurés du vieillard, il grava sur leur marbre  
Ce que je viens de raconter.

We see the character of the old man kept up to the last. He laments their untimely fate with tears, notwithstanding they had, when alive, treated him with such disrespect ; and, imputing all to the levity of their age, grieves to see them thus cut down in the very flower of their youth.

La Fontaine is so well known, for the agreeableness and familiarity of his stile, that we chose the above two fables as specimens of what he is capable of, in the noble and sublime. In short, he is a writer of general utility. He is the amusement of childhood, the *Mentor* of youth, and the friend of the adult. In his works, the philosopher finds a valuable system of morality ; the man of letters a perfect model of good taste ; and the man of the world a true picture of society. He appears to have laid hold positively of the exact point wherein all sorts of taste concenter ; I mean, that certain enlightened portion of truth, which is the basis of good sense, and the first principle

principle of reason; and as he always takes care to give us this without pomp or disguise, it is not to be wondered at, that it appears with all its lustre in his works.

### Les Lapins.

The fable of the rabbits is of another kind to the foregoing: it is wholly in the agreeable and sprightly taste of imagery:

A l'heure de l'affût, soit lorsque la lumière  
Précipite ses traits dans l'humide séjour,  
Soit lorsque le soleil rentre dans sa carrière,  
Et que n'étant plus nuit, il n'est pas encor jour.

Nothing can be more pleasing and picturesque, than this description of the rising and setting of the sun. The colors are all furnished by poetry. The fourth verse is particularly happy in expressing the instant of the dawn, *sideribus dubiis*. What we call a happy verse, a happy turn is whatever seems the produce of chance, rather than reflection, and to have been found, rather than made. Every writer knows, that sometimes a thing will drop from his pen, that he never either sought or desired, or had the least idea of: this is called a happy turn, thought or expression.

Au bord de quelque bois sur un arbre je grimpe;  
En nouveau Jupiter du haut de cet Olimpe  
Je foudroie à discretion  
Un lapin qui n'y pensoit guere.

In the first verse, *grimpe* is an image; in the next, the allusion to Jupiter and Olympus en-

tertain the mind, by the comparison between great and small. The two others are happy, *je foudroie*, is a strong expression. *A discrétion* paints the advantage the shooter had of his mark. He is at his ease, waiting for his game, which comes and places itself directly opposite his piece. In the very instant that the rabbit thinks himself most secure, *il n'y pensoit guere*, he is struck dead, *foudroyé*. Phædrus says, speaking of the sparrow carried away by the falcon, *ipsum nec opinum rapit*, he trusses him up when he least thought of it. La Fontaine says the same thing, but in a much more lively manner.

Je vois fuir aussi tot toute la nation  
Des lapins, qui sur la bruyere,  
L'oeil éveillé, l'oreille au guet,  
S'égayoient, & de thim parfumoient leur banquet.

These lines furnish us with a very entertaining picture; the rabbits are here painted to the life: *L'œil éveillé*, with watchful eye, *l'oreille au guet*, pricked up ears; *il s'égayoient*, they frisked about: the numbers are enchanting; *leur banquet parfümé de thim*, their feast perfumed with fragrant thyme conveys a beautiful idea, and the terms made use of are equally noble and graceful.

Le bruit du coup fait que la bande  
S'en va chercher sûreté  
Dans la souterraine cité:  
Mais le danger s'oublie, & cette peur si grande  
S'évanouit bientôt. Je revois les lapins  
Plus gais qu'auparavant revenir sous mes mains.  
Ne reconnoit-on pas en cela les humains?

This

This moral seems to be the reader's own reflection, rather than the thought of the poet. ||

If we read these passages together, without breaking in upon them by the remarks here made, we shall discover the easy connection of the ideas, which go as it were hand in hand, and cloath themselves as they rise in all the justness, grandeur and beauty of expression. La Fontaine was a true fabler (*Fablier*) as was wittily said of him by M. de Bouillon. He did not make his fables; they came to him. Another who had had the same subject to treat, might have transfused a spirit and beauty into the matter and versification, but we should not have found this continued and equal chain of objects: the marks of the linking would have appeared; whereas here the whole seems rather the work of nature than of art. The muses dictated while Fontaine wrote.

We have had instances of the sublime, the tender and the sprightly in his fables, do we want the grotesque?

Rapportons-nous à Raminagrobis.

C'étoit un chat vivant comme un dévot hermite,

Un chat faisant la chatte mite,

Un saint homme de chat, bien fourré, gros & gras,

Arbitre expert sur tous les cas.

Here advances the ox with slow and heavy pace, complaining of the ingratitude of mankind:

Quand



Quand il eut ruminé tout le cas en sa tête,

Il dit : que du labeur des ans

Pour nous seuls il portoit les soins les plus pesans ;

Parcourant sans cesser ce long cercle de peines,

Qui, revenant sur soi, ramenoit dans nos plaines

Ce que Ceres nous donne & vend aux animaux :

Que cette suite de travaux

Pour recompense avoit, de tous tant que nous sommes,

Force coups, peu de gré. Puis quand il étoit vieux

On croyoit l'honorer chaque fois que les hommes

Achetoient de son sang l'indulgence des dieux.

Ainsi par le boeuf.

This heavy versification is admirably well adapted to the character of the speaker.

If we are for battles :

Le moucheron sonna la charge

Fut le trompette & le héros.

Dans l'abord il se met au large

Puis prend son tems, fond sur le cou

Du lion, qu'il rend presque fou.

Le quadrupède écume, & son oeil étincelle ;

Il rugit : on se cache, on tremble à l'environ ;

Et cette allarme universelle

Est l'ouvrage d'un moucheron. . . . .

Le malheureux lion se déchire lui-même,

Fait resonner sa queue à l'entour de ces flancs,

Bat l'air, qui n'en peut mais ; & sa fureur extreme

Le fatigue, l'abbat ; le voilà sur les dents.

L'insecte du combat se retire avec gloire ;

Comme il sonna la charge, il sonne la victoire,

Va par-tout l'annoncer, & rencontre en chemin

L'embuscade d'une araignée ;

Il y rencontre aussi sa fin.

And

And herein again we have an image of slumber and soft repose :

Guillot, le vrai Guillot, étendu sur l'herbette,

Dormoit alors profondément.

Son chien dormoit aussi, comme aussi sa musette ;

La plupart des brebis dormoient pareillement.

It is sufficient to make a great man, that he possesses one single part in an eminent degree, but La Fontaine united them all. Who ever gave lessons of morality with greater energy and grace ? What dramatic poet has better painted his characters ? Where is the narration more concise, and at the same time full of fire ? . . . But I forget that my admiration is carrying me away, and am insensibly returning to the panegyric I had quitted.

#### MR. DE LA MOTTE.

La Motte's fables have made so much noise in the world, that we cannot dispense ourselves from taking notice of them, while on this head. La Fontaine was never at the trouble of inventing subjects, but contented himself with dressing up such as he found ready to his hand, in a manner peculiar to himself. Mr. de la Motte, who had to enter the lists with so formidable a rival, was willing to arm himself with the merit of invention : and the invention as well as form of his fables are entirely his own. He undertook to compose one hundred fables, and he has performed his engagement. They all partake of

wit

wit and spirit. Some of them in particular are in great esteem. We shall content ourselves in this place with giving the reader that of the two sparrows :

Les Moineaux.

Dans un bois habité d'un million d'oiseaux,  
Spacieuse cité du peuple volatile.

L'amour unissoit deux Moineaux.

Amour constant, quoique tranquille.

Caresse sur caresse & feux toujours nouveaux,

Ils ne se quittoient point. Sur les memes rameaux

On les eut vu percher toute la matinée,

Voler ensemble à la-dinée,

S'abreuver dans les memes eaux,

Célébrer tout le jour leur flamme fortunée,

Et de leurs amoureux duos

Attendrir au loin les échos.

Meme roche la nuit est encor leur hoteffe,

Ils goutent côte à côté un sommeil gracieux ;

L'une sans son amant, l'autre sans sa maîtresse

N'eut jamais pu fermer les yeux.

Ainsi dans une paix profonde,

De plaisirs assidus nourrissant leurs amours,

Entre tous les oiseaux du monde

Ils se choissoient tous les jours.

Tous deux à l'ordinaire allant de compagnie,

Dans un piège se trouvent pris.

En meme cage aussi-tot ils sont-mis.

Vous voila, mes enfans ; passez la votre vie,

Que vous etes heureux d'être si bon amis !

Mais dès le premier jour il semble

Que le couple encagé ne s'aime plus si fort ;

Second jour, ennui d'être ensemble ;

Troisième,

Troisième, coup de bec, puis on se hait a mort.

Plus de duos, c'est musique nouvelle ;

Dispute, & puis combat pour vuidier la querelle.

Qui les appaisera ? Pour en venir a bout,

Il fallut séparer le mâle & la femelle.

Leur flamme en liberté devoit etre éternelle ;

La nécessité gata tout.

The fourth verse in this fable appears rather more ingenious than natural: *Amour constant, quoique tranquile*; a constant though a peaceful flame. The eight immediately following are exceedingly smooth and pleasing: nothing can be more affecting than the union he there describes: and *voler ensemble à la dinée* is certainly very picturesque:

Entre tous les oiseaux du monde

Ils se choisissent tous les jours.

This is beautiful, because it is both brilliant and true. This loving pair are unfortunately caught at once in the same net. They now grow weary of each other, their indifference soon turns to hatred: and with this circumstance the fable ends.

The author would have pleased us much better, had he represented the two sparrows preserving their fidelity in the midst of their misfortunes.

They may be compared to two lovers, who have fallen into the hands of pirates, and are made captives: is it not natural to think, that their



their common misfortune should unite them more strictly than ever; and doubly tie the knot of love. The sentiment here would have been more delicate, and the moral likewise the better for it. For, indeed, what would Mr. de la Motte give us to understand? That as soon as two hearts become joined by contract than they are no longer so by inclination? In the first place, this is far from being a general truth, which was of itself sufficient to prevent its being made a maxim. In the second place, the maxim itself is repugnant to the principles of religion, and the interests of community. What necessity then was he under of inculcating it? Lastly, it is not even just, for the two sparrows, being joined in the same state of captivity, does not proceed from the consent of an irrevocable will; their chains are merely exterior; but we know these are not such as the most trouble the mind, as Mr. de la Motte would seem to insinuate by his moral.

His expressions likewise are several of them too long; for example, is *côte-à-côte*, sufficiently easy when speaking of two birds? *Plaisirs assidus*. The term assiduous is rather applicable to persons than things. *Vous voilà, mes enfans, passez là votre vie*. This verse is natural and familiar, but does it seem sufficiently of a piece with the rest. The coloring appears too glaring, and the blending of the lines too harsh. *Le couple ne s'aime plus si fort; si fort* is familiar, but it is perhaps too much so. The rest is an entire medley.

medley. The phrases are too short, and the narrative part too long. When La Fontaine paints a succession of degrees, his transitions are more brisk. As may be seen in his Frog that swells itself to rival the bulk of the ox; or the fox who is learning the wolf's trade, and repeats over his part.

D'abord il s'y prit mal, puis un peu mieux, puis bien.  
Puis enfin il n'y manqua rien.

### ENGLISH FABULISTS.

#### CHAUCER.

**C**HAUCER was confessedly the father of English poetry, and is therefore intitled to as much veneration as Homer and Virgil among the Greeks and Latins. He followed nature every where, but was never so bold as to go beyond her. His verse certainly is not harmonious to us, but it is like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus speaks of with commendation, *Auribus istius temporis accommodata*. Nay, it is musical, compared with the numbers of Lidgate and Gower his cotemporaries. There is a rude sweetness in it, which is natural and pleasing though not perfect.

His genius was doubtless wonderful and comprehensive. His characters are admirably contrasted, and distinguished from each other, and from themselves. The words are given up as a part not to be defended in our poet. The thoughts

thoughts are every where just, and without that false glare, which so often deceives the incautious reader into a judgment his more cool deliberation is apt to discover.

He has certainly built upon the inventions of other men in most of his pieces (as Ovid, whom he resembles in many particulars, did before him;) yet he had some of his own, as his *Wife of Bath's Tale*, and the *Cock and the Fox*.

Our poet was too apt to run into ribaldry in several of his pieces, and that even to a degree of grossness; in this we shall not pretend to excuse him, no, not even by urging the taste of his times, the casts of his characters, &c. &c. pretences which have been too frequently made use of to excuse a looseness of morals, or inordinance of pen, in many of our modern writers. However, as the laws of our country allow every culprit a hearing, we will here beg leave to introduce Chaucer, to our readers as pleading his own cause, and offering some excuses for his faults, that will at the same time afford an instance of this ancient bard's stile and manner, which was the delight of the age he lived in, however forgotten and neglected he may at present lie eclipsed by the lustre of our modern verse:

But first I pray you of your courtesy  
That ye ne arrete it nought my villainy  
Though that I plainly speak in this matter  
To tellen ye her words and eke her chere

No

Ne though I speak her words properly,  
 For this ye knowen as well as I;  
 Who shall tellen a tale after a man  
 His mote rehearse as nigh as ever he can.  
 Everich word of it been in his charge,  
 All speak he, never so rudely, ne large  
 Or else he mote tellen his tale untrue,  
 Or feine things, or find words new.  
 He may not spare, altho' he were his brother,  
 He mote as well say o word as another,  
 Christ spake himself, full broad in holy writ,  
 And well I wote no villainy is it.  
 Eke Plato saith, who so can him rede  
 The words mote been coufen to the dede.

We have here a specimen of Chaucer's language, which is so obsolete, that his sense is scarce to be understood; and you have likewise more than one instance of the inequality of his numbers. Yet many of his verses consist of ten syllables, and the words not much behind our present English. As for instance, these two lines in the description of the Carpenter's Young Wife.

Wincing she was, as is a jolly colt,  
 Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.

This poet is to the English language what Marot was to the French. He died in the year 1400, and lies in Westminster Abbey, where there is a Monument said to be erected at the order of Henry IV.



## MR. DRYDEN.

This celebrated poet was born at Oundle in Northamptonshire, in the year 1631. His character as a poet is too well known to need any illustration here. His memory will be ever dear to all lovers of good English poetry. He died in 1701.

This author makes but a small figure in the class of fabulists, having nothing of his own in this species of writing; but he has so improved and embellished one of our most esteemed old authors in this way (I mean Chaucer) by translating him into modern verse, that he seems in some measure entitled to the honour of the pieces he has thus rescued from the rust of time and barbarism. And, indeed, the great La Fontaine himself, that prince of modern apologue, is strictly speaking little more than a copyist from Boccacio Bandello, and other Italian writers; but then he has so copied, that these originals appear more charming, more striking, and with greater elegance in his narration than they ever would have done in their native dress. His manner gives a new life and air to the stories. In this he may be compared to a prism, which, receiving one simple ray of light, so varies and diversifies it, as to form the most beautiful and pleasing assemblage of lights and shades. Mr. Dryden, to use his own words, has not tied himself to a literal translation; but has often omitted

ted what he judged necessary, or not of dignity enough to appear in company of better thoughts, adding at times such of his own as he thought requisite to give a new lustre to his author, confined by the indigence of words in the age he lived in. "And to this I was the more emboldened (adds he) because, if I may be permitted to say it of myself, I found I had a soul congenial to his, and that I had been conversant in the same studies."

The fables he has thus rendered (out of the old English) are, Palemon and Arcite, or the Knight's Tale; the Cock and the Fox, or the Tale of the Nun's Priest; the Wife of Bath's Tale; and the Flower and the Leaf.

We shall present our readers with an extract from the second of these, as a specimen of the stile and numbers of this author, and to afford them the means of judging of the justness of the copy he has made, by a comparison with his original, which we shall confront with him in the opposite leaf.

The

## The Cock and the Fox:

As written by CHAUCER.

**A** Pore wedowe, somedele islept in age,  
 Was whilom dwelling in a poore cotage  
 Beside a groue, stonding in a dale :

A yerde she had, enclosed all about  
 With stickes, and dry ditched without;  
 In which she had a cocke hight Chaunteclere;  
 In all the land of crowing nas his pere;  
 His voice was merier than the mery orgon  
 On masse daies that in the churches gon:  
 Well sikerer was his crowing in his loge  
 Than is a clocke, or in an abbey an orloge:  
 By nature he knew ech assencion  
 Of the equinoctiall in the toun;  
 For when degrees xv. were assended  
 Than crew he, that it might not be amended.

His come was redder than the fine corall,  
 And battelled as it had be a castell wall;  
 His bill was blacke, as any jet it shone;  
 Like asure were his legges and his tone;  
 His nailes whiter than the lilly floure,  
 And like the burned gold was his colour.

This gentle cocke, had in governaunce  
 Seven kennes, to done his plesaunce;  
 Which were his sisters and his paramours  
 And wonder like to him, as of colours;  
 Of which the fayrest hewed in the throte  
 Was called fair damosell Partelote:  
 He fethered her a hundred times a day,  
 And she him pleseth, all that ever she may;

Curteis she was, discrete, and debonaire,  
 And comenable, and bare herselfe so faire;  
 Sens the time that she was sevenight old;  
 That truelich, she hath the hert in hold  
 Of Chaunteclere, loking in every lith,  
 He loveth her so, that well was him therwith;  
 But such a joy it was to here him sing,  
 When the bright sunne gan to spring;  
 In swete acord, my lefe is ferre in lond.

And it so fell, that in the dawning,  
 As Chaunteclere, among his wives all,  
 Sat on his perch that was in the hall;  
 And next him sat his faire Pertelore;  
 This Chaunteclere gan to grone in his throtes;  
 As a man in his dreame is drenched sore;  
 And whan that Pertelot thus herd him rore;  
 She was agast; and said, hert dere,  
 What eyleth you, to grone in this manere?  
 Ye be a very sleper, sie, for shamed

And he answerd thus, by God, madame,  
 I pray you, that you take it not in gresse,  
 By God, I mette, I was in such mischiese;  
 Right now, that yet mine hert is sore afright;  
 Now, God (qd. he) my sweven retch aright,  
 And kepe my body out of foule prisoun;  
 Me mette, that I romed up and down  
 Within our yerd, where I saw a beest  
 Was like an hound, and would have made areest  
 Upon my body, and would have had me deed;  
 His colour was betwixt yellow and reed,  
 And tipped was his taile; and both his eeres  
 With black, unlike the remnant of his heeres;  
 His snout small, with glowing eyen twey,  
 Yet for his loke, almost for seare I dey.



This causeth me my groning doubtlesse,

Away (qd. she) fie, for shame, hertlesse,

Alas (qd. she) for by God above,

Now have ye lost my hert, and all my love,

I cannot love a coward, by my faith,

For certes, what so any woman saith ;

We all desire, if that it might be,

To have husbonds, hardy, wise and fre,

And secrete, and no nigard, ne no sole ;

Ne him that is agast of every tole ;

Ne none avantour, by that God above,

Now durst ye say for shame, unto your love,

That any sweven might make you aserd ?

Have ye no mannes hert, and have a berd ?

Alas, and con ye be aserd of sweuents ?

Nothing but vanite, God wotte, in sweuen is.

Sweuens ben engendred of replections,

And of fume, and of complections ;

When humours ben to habundant in a wight,

Certes this dreame which ye have met to night ;

I tell you trouth, ye may trust me,

Cometh of superfluite, and reed colour parde,

Which cause folke to drede in her dremes,

Of arowes, and of fire with reed lemes,

Of reed beestes, that woll hem bite,

Of conteke, and of waspes great and lite ;

Right as the humour of melancoly,

Causeth many a man in slepe to cry,

For fere of great bulles, and beres blake,

Or els that blacke diuels woll hem take.

Of other humours could I tell also,

That werke a man in slepe much wo ;

But I wol passe, as lightly as I can.

Lo Caton, which that was so wise a man,

Said

Said he not thus, do not force of dreemes.

Madame (qd. he) gramercy of your lore,  
But nathelesse, as touching dan Caton,  
That of wisdom hath so great renoun,  
Though he bade no dreemes for to drede,  
By God, men may in olde bookes rede;  
Of many a man, more of auctoritie,  
Than ever Caton was, so mote I thee;  
That all the reurs saieth of his sentence,  
And have well founde by experience,  
'That dreemes ben significations,  
As wel of joye, as of tribulations.

And with the word he flewe down fro the beine;  
For it was day, and eke the hennes all;  
And with a chuck, began hem far to call;  
For he had found a corne lay in the yarde,  
Royall he was, and no more aferde;  
He feddred Pertelot twentie time,  
And tradde her eke as oft, er it was prime;  
He loketh as it were a grimme lioun,  
And on his toes he romed up and down;  
Him deined not to set his fete to the grounde,  
He chucked, whan he had a corne yfound;  
And to him than ran his wives all,

As royall as a prince in his hall.  
Leave I this Chaunticleer in his pasture,  
And after woll I tell of his adventure.  
Madame Pertelot, my worldes blisse,  
Herken how these blisful birdes sing,  
And see the fresh floures how they spring;  
Full is mine hert of reuel and solas,  
But sodainly him fell a sorowful caas;

For ever the latter ende of joye is wo,  
 God wote, worldly joy is soone ago;  
 And if a rethore could faire endite,  
 He in a chronicle might safely write,  
 As for a soveraine, not abilitie.

A col fox (ful of sleight and iniquitie)  
 That in the groue had wonned yeres three; a many  
 By high imagination aforne caste,  
 The same night, through the hedge braste;  
 Into the yerde, there Chaunteclere the faire,  
 Was wont and eke his wives to repaire;  
 And in a bedde of wortes still he lay,  
 Til it was passed undren of the day;  
 Waiting his time, on Chaunteclere to fall,  
 As gladly done these homicides all  
 That in awaite lie to murdre men.

Faire in the sonde, to bathe her merely,  
 Lieth Pertelot, and all her sisters by,  
 Ayenst the sunne, and Chaunteclere so fre,  
 Song merier, than the Marmaide in the see,  
 For Phisiologus saith utterly.  
 How that they singen well and merely.

And so befell as he cast his eye  
 Among the wortes on a butterflie;  
 He was ware of the foxe that laie full lowe,  
 Nothing than list him for to crowe;  
 But cryed, cocke, cocke, and up he stert,  
 As one that was affraide in his hert;  
 For naturally beafts desireth to flie  
 Fro her contrarie, if he may it see;  
 Tho he never erst had seen it with his eye,  
 This Chaunteclere, when he gan him espie;

He

He would have fled, but the foxe anone,  
Said, gentle fir, alas, what woll ye done?  
Be ye affrayd of me, that am your frende?

Now certes, I were worse than a fende,  
If I to you would harme, or villanie,  
I am not come your counsaile to espie;  
But, truely, the cause of my comming,  
Was onely to here howe ye sing,  
For sothly ye have as mery a steuen,  
As any angell hath, that is in heven;  
Therewith ye have of musicke more feling,  
Than had Boece, or any that can sing;  
My lorde, your father, God his soule blesse,  
And eke your mother of her gentelnesse;  
Have in my house ben, to my great ease,  
And certes sir, full fain would I you please.  
But for speken of finging, I woll sey,  
So mote I broken wel mine eyen twey,  
Save you, ne herde I never man sing,  
As did your father in the morning;  
Certes it was of herte, all that he song,  
And for to make his voice more strong,  
He would so pain him, that with both his eyen  
He must winke, so loude he must crien;  
And stonden on his tiptoes therewithall,  
And stretch forth his neck, long and small;  
And eke he was of such discretion,  
That there was no man in no region,  
That him in song or wisdome might passe,  
I have wel redde dan Burnel the asse,  
Among his verses, how that there was a cocke,  
For that a priestes sonne gave a knocke  
Upon his legges, while he was yong and nice,  
He made him for to lese his benefice,



But certaine there is no comparifon,  
Betwixt the wifdome and discrecion  
Of your father, and of his subtiltie,  
Now fingeth, fir, for faint charitie;  
Let fe, can ye your father counterfete.

This Chaunteclere his wings gan to bete,  
As a man that could his trefon aspie,  
So was he ravifhed with his flaterie.

Alas ye lordes, many a falfe flaterour  
Is in your courte, and many a falfe defingour,  
That please you well more, by my faith,  
Than he that sothfastneffe unto you faith;  
Redeth Ecclesiast of flaterie,  
Beware, ye lordes, of her trecherie.

This Chaunteclere fode hie upon his toos,  
Stretching his necke, and held his eyen cloos,  
And gan to crowe loude for the nones,  
And dan Ruffel the foxe start up at ones,  
And by the gorget hent Chaunteclere,  
And on his backe, toward the wood him bere;  
For yet there was no man that him fued.

Certes fuch cry, ne lamentacion,  
Has never of ladies made, whan that Ilion  
Was won, and Pirrus with his bright fwerde,  
Whan he hent king Priam by the berde,  
And flough him (as faieth *Eneidos*)  
As made all the hennes in the cloos,  
When they had losse of Chaunteclere the fight,  
But foverainly dame Pertelot fhright,  
Well louder than did Hafdriballes wife,  
Whan that her hufbond hath loft his life;  
And that the Romaines had brent Cartage,  
She was fo full of torment and of rage,

That

That wilfully into the fire she sterre,  
And brent herselfe, with a stedfast herte.

The sely widowe, and her daughters two,  
Herde the hennescrie and make wo;  
And out-at the dore sterre they anon,  
And saw the foxe towarde the wood gon,  
And bare upon his hackethe Cocke away,  
And cried out, harow and well away,  
Aha the foxe, and after him they ran,  
And eke with staves, many another man;  
Ran Coll our dogge, Talbot, and eke garlonde,  
And Malkin, with her distaffe in her honde,  
Ran cowe and calfe, and eke the verie hogges,  
For they so fore aserde were of the dogges;  
And shouting of men, and of women eke,  
They ran so, her hert thought to breke;  
They yellen as fendes do in hell.

Lo, how fortune tourneth sodainly,  
The hope and the pride of her enemy.  
This cocke that laie upon the foxe backe,  
In all his drede unto the foxe he spake,  
And saied, fir, if I were as ye,  
Yet should I saie, as wife God help me;  
Tourneth ayen, ye proud churles all,  
A very pestilence upon you fall;  
Now I am come unto this wood side,  
Maugre your hed, the cocke shall here abide;  
I woll him eat in faith; and that anon.

The foxe answered, in faith it shal be doen.  
And as he spake the worde, all sodainly,  
This cocke brake from his mouth deliverly;  
And high upon a tree he flewe anon;  
And whan the foxe saw that he was gon,

Alas (qd. he) O Chauntecleere, alas!  
I have (qd. he) doe to you trespas;  
In as much as I made you aserde,  
When I you hent, and brought out of your yerde;  
But, fir, I did it not in no wicked entent,  
Come down, and I shal tel you what I ment;  
I shal you say sothe, God helpe me so.

Nay, than (qd. he) I shrewe us both two,  
And, first, I shrewe myself, both blood and bones,  
If thou begyle me ofter than ones,  
Thou shalt no more with thy flatterie,  
Doe me sing with a winking eye;  
For he that winketh, when he should see,  
All wilfully, God, let him never thee.  
Naie (qd. the foxe) but God geve him mischance,  
That is so indiscrete of governaunce;  
That jangleth, whan that he should have pees,  
Lo, such it is for to be recheles  
And negligent, and trust on flatterie.  
But ye that hold this tale a lie,  
As of a foxe, of a cocke, and of a hen,  
Taketh the moralitie good men.  
For saint Poule saieth, all that written is,  
To our doctrine it is written ywis,  
Taketh the frute, and let the chaffe be still.

Now, good God, if that be thy will,  
As saieth my lorde, so make us all good men,  
And bring us to the high blesse. Amen.

## The Cock and the Fox:

As written by DRYDEN.

**T**HERE liv'd, as authors tell, in days of Yore,  
 A widow somewhat old and very poor;  
 Deep in a cell her cottage lonely stood,  
 Well thatch'd, and under covert of a wood.

Within this homestead liv'd without a peer,  
 For crowing loud, the noble Chanticleer;

(*Chanticleer.*) This is one of the ornaments  
 of a narration, where an image is conveyed in a  
 single word. The term Chanticleer, the shrill  
 or clear singing bird;—admirably well expressing  
 the peculiar excellency of the hero of the piece,  
 in this accomplishment.

So hight our cock, whose singing did surpass  
 The very notes of organs at the mass.  
 High was his comb, and coral-red withal,  
 In dents embattled like a castle wall;  
 His bill was raven black, and shone like jet,  
 Blue were his legs, and orient were his feet:  
 White were his nails, like silver to behold,  
 His body glittering like the burnish'd gold.

This gentle cock for solace of his life,  
 Six misses had, besides his lawful wife;  
 Scandal that spares no king, tho' ne'er so good,  
 Says, they were all of his own flesh and blood.

But passing this, as from our tale apart,  
 Dame Partlet was the sovereign of his Heart;



Ardent in love, outrageous in his play,  
 He feathered her an hundred times a day.  
 She was his only joy, and he her pride,  
 She, when he walk'd, went picking by his Side;  
 If spurning up the ground, he found a corn,  
 The tribute in his bill to her was borne.

It happ'd that perching on the parlor-beam,  
 Amidst his wives, he had a deadly dream.  
 Dame Partlet ever nearest to his side ———  
 Heard him make piteous moan, and fore aghast,  
 She peck'd, and pull'd, and waken'd him at last.  
 Dear heart, says she, you groan since morning light,  
 As something had disturb'd your noble spright.

(*Noble spright*) The hen addresses the cock in this place, as if he was a person of great importance; which forms an agreeable figure in the fable. And we shall accordingly find in the course of the fable, that he deems himself an animal of no small consequence.

And, madam, well I might, said Chanticleer,  
 Never was Shrovetide cock in such a fear.

(*Shrovetide cock*) Is a good allusion, and very expressive of the panic which then occupied him.

Ev'n still I run all over in a sweat,  
 My princely senses not recover'd yet.

(*My princely senses*) Seignior Chanticleer begins already to dignify himself; he will preserve it very well through the whole of the fable.

Know;

Know, dame, I dreamt within my troubled breast,  
 That in our yard I saw a murd'rous beast,  
 That on my body would have made arrest.  
 With waking eyes I ne'er beheld his fellow,  
 His colour was betwixt a red and yellow;  
 Tipp'd was his tail, and both his prickling ears  
 With black; and much unlike his other hairs.  
 The rest in shape a beagle's whelp throughout,  
 With broader forehead, and a sharper snout;  
 Deep in his front were sunk his glowing eyes,  
 Bethinks I yet behold him with surprize.

Now, fy, for shame, quo' she, by heav'n above,  
 Thou hast for ever lost thy lady's love.

If aught from fearful dreams may be divin'd,  
 They signify a cock of dunghill kind.

All dreams, as in old Galen I have read,  
 Are from repletion and complexion bred;  
 From rising fumes of indigested food,  
 And noxious humors that infest the blood.

Choler a dust congeals our blood with fear,  
 Then black bulls toss us, and black devils tear;  
 In sanguine, airy dreams, aloft we bound,  
 With rheums oppress'd, we sink in rivers drown'd;  
 More I could say, but thus concludes my theme,  
 The dominating humor makes the dream;  
 Cato was in his time accounted wise,  
 And he condemns them all for empty lies.

(*Cato was in his time, &c.*) This speech, and the following, present us with fine instances of the sprightly and entertaining stile of this author; and of humorous allusions, producing images serious or comic, with the matter of the fable. It is likewise an elegant satyr on those pedantic spi-

rits, who are for ever puzzling their own brains,  
and deafening their hearers with learned reasonings  
upon the most trivial circumstances.

Madam, quoth he, grammercy for your care,  
But Cato, whom you quoted, you might spare.  
'Tis true, a wise and worthy man he seems,  
And, as you say, gave no belief to dreams;  
But other men of more authority,  
And by th'immortal pow'rs, as wise as he,  
Maintain with sounder sense, that dreams forebode,  
For Homer plainly says, they come from God;  
Nor Cato said it, but some idle fool,  
Impos'd on Cato's name on boys at school.

Much more I know, which I forbear to speak,  
For, see, the ruddy day begins to break;  
Let this suffice, that plainly I foresee,  
My dream was bad, and bodes adversity.

He said, and downward flew from off the beam;  
Then crowing, clapp'd his wings, th'appointed call,  
To cluck his wives together in the hall.

By this the widow had unbarr'd the door,  
And Chanticleer went strutting out before;  
With royal courage, and with heart so light,  
As shew'd he scorn'd the visions of the night.  
Then turning to dame Partlet, see, my dear,  
How lavish nature has adorn'd the year;  
How the pale primrose, and blue violet spring,  
And birds essay their throats disus'd to sing;  
All these are ours, and I with pleasure see,  
Man walking on two legs, and aping me;

An unfledg'd creature, of a lumpish frame,  
 Endu'd with fewer particles of flame:  
 Our dame sets cowering by the kitchen fire,  
 I draw fresh air, and nature's works admire;  
 And e'en this day, in more delight abound,  
 Than since I was an egg I ever found.

(*Then turning to dams Parilet.*) There cannot be a more noble lecture of morality, nor a finer satire on vanity and self-sufficiency, than we meet within the 19 following lines. How beautiful a picture has the poet drawn of the absurd and arrogant thoughts which men are so apt to entertain of their own importance in the creation; as that the stars in the firmament, and all the glories of nature, were created only to please their eyes, and amuse their imaginations.

The time shall come, when Chanticleer shall wish  
 His words unsaid, and hate his boasted bliss:  
 The crested bird shall by experience know,  
 Jove made not him his master-piece below;  
 And learn the latter end of joy is woe:  
 The vessel of his bliss to dregs is run,  
 And heav'n will have him taste his other tun.

A fox full-fraught with seeming sanctity,  
 That fear'd an oath, but like the Devil would lie;

(*A fox full-fraught.*) The entry or front appearance of the fox is made here in the true spirit of fable, and conveys the most lively idea of the manners, as well as exterior deportment of this subtle beast.

This



This pious cheat,  
 On Chanticleer his wicked fancy beat;  
 And in his high imagination cast,  
 By stratagem to gratify his taste;  
 Yet fearing to be seen, within a bed  
 Of colworts he conceal'd his wily head;  
 There skulk'd till afternoon, and watch'd his time,  
 (As murd'ers use) to perpetrate his crime.

Now lay ma'am Partlet basking in the sun,  
 Breast-high in sand: her sisters in a row,  
 Enjoy'd the beams above, and warmth below;  
 The Cock that ever of his flesh was free,  
 Sung merrier than the mermaid in the sea;  
 And so beset, that as he cast his eye,  
 Among the colworts on a butterfly,  
 He saw false Reynard, where he lay full low,  
 I need not swear he had no list to crow;  
 But cry'd, cock, cock, and gave a sudden start,  
 As sore dismay'd, and frighted at his heart.  
 For birds and beasts, inform'd by nature, know  
 Kinds opposite to them, and fly their foe:  
 So Chanticleer, who never saw a fox,  
 Yet shunn'd him, as a sailor shuns the rocks.

But the false loon, who could not work his will  
 By open force, employ'd his flatter'ing skill:  
 I hope, my lord, said he, I don't offend,  
 Are you afraid of me, that am your friend?

(*I hope my lord.*) How admirable well imagined  
 is this exordium to the speech of the fox; nothing  
 less than this humility in his approach and address,  
 together with the seasoning of flattery, and air  
 of consequence, reflected on Chanticleer, by giv-  
 ing

ing him the title of my lord ! could have been supposed capable of reconciling the cock to the least conference with a creature, whose appearance answered so exact to the image that had filled him with such apprehensions in his dream the night before. The Poet appears to have been fully sensible of this, and has with great art supplied every exigence of the subject.

I were a beast, indeed, to do you wrong,  
 I who have lov'd and honour'd you so long;  
 Stay, gentle Sir, nor take a false alarm,  
 For, on my soul, I never meant you harm;  
 I come no spy, nor as a traitor press,  
 To learn the secrets of your soft recess;  
 Far be from Reynard, so prophane a thought,  
 But by the sweetness of your voice was brought;  
 For as I bill my beads, by chance I heard  
 The song as of an angel in the yard:  
 A song that would have charm'd th'infernal Gods,  
 And banish'd horror from their dark abodes;  
 Had Orpheus sung it to the nether sphere,  
 So much the hymn had pleas'd the tyrant's ear,  
 The wife had been detain'd, to keep the husband there.

My lord, your fire familiarly I knew,  
 A peer deserving such a son as you;  
 He, with your lady-mother (whom heav'n rest)  
 Has often grac'd my house, and been my guest:  
 To view his living features does me good,  
 For I am your poor neighbour in the wood,  
 And in my cottage should be proud to see,  
 The worthy heir of my friend's family.  
 Now, sing, my lord, if not for love of me,  
 Yet for the sake of sweet saint Charity;

Make

Make hills, and dales, and earth, and heav'n rejoice,  
And emulate your father's angel voice.

The Cock was pleas'd to hear him speak so fair,  
And proud beside, as solar people are ;  
Nor could the treason from the truth descry,  
So was he ravished with his flattery ;  
So much the more as from a little elf,  
He had a high opinion of himself,  
Tho' sickly, tender, and not large of limb,  
Concluding all the world was made for him.

(*The cock well pleased*) The artful and well turned flattery of the fox has now had its desired effect. Chanticleer restless about, and scarce able to contain himself, so wrapped up is he in the opinion of his own merit, lies wholly at the mercy of the sly seducer. We have a fine picture of human nature presented us in the character of the cock ; imbecility of body and of mind could not convince this little vain trifler of his own insignificance, and the little title he had to the extravagant encomiums lavished on him by the fox. The application of the moral to princes and great men is extremely fine.

Ye Princes, rais'd by Poets to the Gods,  
And Alexander'd up in lying odes,  
Believe nor ev'ry flatt'ring knave's report,  
There's many a Reynard lurking in the court.

This Chanticleer, of whom the story sings,  
Stood high upon his toes, and clapp'd his wings ;  
Then stretch'd his neck, and wink'd with both his eyes,  
Ambitious, as he sought th' Olympic prize ;

But

But while he pain'd himself, to raise his note,  
False Reynard rush'd, and caught him by the throat.  
Then on his back he laid the precious load,  
And sought his wonted shelter in the wood.

Not louder cries when Ilium was in flames,  
Were sent to Heav'n by woful Trojan dames;  
When Pyrrhus toss'd on high his burnish'd blade,  
And offer'd Priam to his father's shade,  
Than for the cock, the widow'd poultry made.  
Fair Partlet first, when he was born from fight,  
With sovereign shrieks bewail'd her captive knight;  
Far louder than the Carthaginian wife,  
When Asdrubal her husband lost his life.

*(Not louder cries when Ilium)* There is a vast fund of elegant irony in this allusion, which is no small part of the embellishment of fable.

The fox, the wicked fox was all the cry,  
Out from his house ran ev'ry neighbour nigh,  
The vicar first, and after him the crew,  
With forks and staves the felon to pursue;  
Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot with the band,  
And Malkin, with her distaff in her hand.  
Ran cow and calf, and family of hogs,  
In panic terror of pursuing dogs;  
With many a dreadful grunt, and doleful squeak,  
Poor swine, as if their pretty hearts would break;  
The shouts of men, the women in dismay,  
With shrieks augment the terror of the day.

*(Terror of the day)* These twelve lines convey a very humorous and natural description of a village fright; the painting is so lively, that we are in a manner



manner transported into the midst of the hurry and confusion, and hear the squeaking of the pigs, the cackling of the geese, &c. &c.

But see how fortune can confound the wise,  
And when they least expect it turn the dice.

The captive cock, who scarce could draw his breath,  
And lay within the very jaws of death;  
Yet in this agony his fancy wrought,  
And fear supply'd him with this happy thought;  
Your's is the prize, victorious prince, said he,  
The vicar my defeat, and all the village see;  
Enjoy your friendly fortune while you may,  
And bid the churls that envy you the prey,  
Call back their mungril curs, and cease their cry,  
See, fools, the shelter of the wood is nigh,  
And Chanticleer, in your despight shall die.  
He shall be pluck'd and eaten to the bone.

'Tis well advis'd, in faith, it shall be done;  
This Reynard said, but, as the word he spoke,  
The pris'ner with a spring from prison broke;  
Then stretch'd his feather'd fans with all his might,  
And to the neighb'ring maple wing'd his flight.

Whom when the traitor safe on tree beheld,  
He curs'd the gods with shame and sorrow fill'd;  
Yet musing both th'artificer of lies,  
Renews th'assault, and his last batt'ry tries.

Tho' I, said he, did ne'er in thought offend,  
How justly may my lord suspect his friend.

(*Suspect his friend*) The treacherous fox once more tries the power of his former arts; but Chanticleer is too well instructed by dear-bought experience, how dangerous it is to yield too easy a belief

a belief to the smooth strains of flattery. We have here at the same time an example, how far a long course of indulgence in any one vice, rears it at length into an insuperable habitude; not that the late failure of his attempt, tho' obvious to the eyes of the whole village, and dearly felt by the cock, could hinder the impudent fox from having recourse to the very strains with which he began his first deceptive harangue; and addresses the cock with the greatest seeming unconcern and tranquility, as if nothing had happened on his side, but mere acts of friendship and regard.

Th' appearance was against me, I confess,  
Who seemingly have put you in distress;  
Tho' Heav'n can witness I'd no bad intent;

I practis'd it to make you taste your cheer  
With double pleasure, first prepar'd by fear;  
So loyal subjects often serve their prince,  
Forc'd (for his good) to seeming violence,  
Yet mean his sacred person not the least offence.  
Descend to help me, Jove, as you shall find,  
That Reynard comes of no dissembling kind;  
Better, fir cock, let all contention cease,

Prithee, come down, and let us treat of peace;

A peace, with all my soul, says Chanticleer,

But, with your favour, I will treat it here;

And least the truce with treason shall be mixt;

'Tis my concern to have the tree betwixt.

#### THE MORAL.

In this plain fable, you th' effect may see,

Of Negligence, and fond credulity;

And

And learn besides of flatt'ers to beware,  
 Then most pernicious when they speak most fair;  
 The cock and fox, the fool and knave imply,  
 The truth is moral, tho' the tale a lie;  
 Who spoke in parables I dare not say,  
 But, sure, he knew it was a pleasing way,  
 Sound sense by plain example to convey;  
 And in a heathen Author we may find,  
 That pleasure with instruction should be join'd,  
 So take the corn and leave the chaff behind.

The whole story concludes very happily with this moral, which is not far-fetch'd, nor forced, but rises immediately from the things themselves; we may say the very same to ourselves all the time we are reading the fable.

## G A Y.

**T**HIS poet approaches the nearest to the elegant simplicity of La Fontaine, of any of our writers of fable, as the reader may easily satisfy himself by comparing the several extracts we have taken from him in the foregoing part of this Article, and placed along side those of the French poet. We shall therefore content ourselves with giving one of his fables, which will serve to strengthen this observation; it is the cook-maid, the turn-spit, and the ox; in which he gives us a noble lesson of content and resignation, in whatever station it has pleased the author of our being to place us. It is written with an ease and familiarity of stile suited to the characters of the speakers,

ers, and may in every respect be deemed a finished piece of its kind.

The COOK-MAID, the TURN-SPIT, and  
the OX.

To a Poor Man.

CONsider man in every sphere,  
Then tell me, is your lot severe?  
'Tis murmur, discontent, distrust,  
That makes you wretched. God is just.

I grant that hunger must be fed,  
That toil too, earns thy daily bread.  
What then? thy wants are seen and known,  
But ev'ry mortal feels his own.  
We're born a restless, needy crew,  
Shew me a happier man than you.

The dinner must be dress'd at one,  
Where's this vexatious turn-spit gone?  
Unless the skulking cur is caught,  
The sir-loin's spoil'd, and I'm in fault;  
Thus said (for sure you'll think it fit,  
That I the Cook-maid's oaths omit)  
With all the fury of a Cook,  
Her cooler Kitchen, Nan forsook;  
The broom-stick o'er her head she waves,  
She sweats, she stamps, she puffs, she raves;  
The sneaking cur before her flies;  
She whistles, calls; fair speech she tries.  
These nought avail. Her choler burns,  
The fist and cudgel threat by turns.  
With hasty strides she presses near,  
He slinks aloof, and howls with fear.

Was



Was ever cur so curs'd? he cry'd,  
 What star did at my birth preside?  
 Am I for life by compact bound,  
 To tread the wheel's eternal round?  
 Inglorious task! of all our race,  
 No slave is half so mean and base.  
 Had fate a kinder lot assign'd,  
 And form'd me of the lap-dog kind,  
 I then in higher life employ'd,  
 Had indolence and ease enjoy'd,  
 And like a gentleman carest,  
 Had been the lady's fav'rite guest,  
 Or were I sprung from spaniel line,  
 Were his sagacious nostril mine,  
 By me their never-erring guide,  
 From wood and plain their feasts supply'd,  
 Knights, 'squires attendant on my pace,  
 Had shar'd the pleasures of the chase.

Endu'd with native strength and fire,  
 Why call'd I not the lion fire?  
 A lion! such mean views I scorn.  
 Why was I not of woman born?  
 Who dares with reason's pow'r contend?  
 On man we brutal slaves depend,  
 To him all creatures tribute pay,  
 And luxury employs his day.

An Ox by chance o'erheard his moan,  
 And thus rebuk'd the lazy drone.

Dare you at partial fate repine?  
 How kind's your lot, compar'd with mine!  
 Decreed to toil, the barb'rous knife  
 Hath sever'd me from social life,  
 Urg'd by the stimulating goad,  
 I drag the cumb'rous waggon's load:

'Tis

'Tis mine to tame the stubborn plain,  
 Break the stiff soil, and house the grain?  
 Yet I without a murmur bear,  
 The various labours of the year;  
 But then consider, that one day,  
 (Perhaps the hour's not far away)  
 You, by the duties of your post,  
 Shall turn the spit, when I'm the roast,  
 And for reward, shall share the feast,  
 I mean, shall pick my bones at least.

'Till now, the astonish'd our replies,  
 I look'd on all with envious eyes.  
 How false we judge by what appears,  
 All creatures feel their sev'ral cares.  
 If thus yon mighty beast complains,  
 Perhaps man knows superior pains;  
 Let envy then no more torment,  
 Think on the Ox, and learn content.

Thus said, close following at her heel,  
 With cheerful heart he mounts the wheel.

## SECOND ARTICLE.

## Of pastoral Poetry.

**W**E have now seen narrative poetry in it's  
 lowest and most inconsiderable kind, viz.  
 fable. Here we shall find it rise some degrees.  
 The lamb, the ox, and the goat, no longer oc-  
 cupy the scene, but give place to goatherds and  
 shepherds, who entertain each other with their  
 own concerns, and the things which they see a-  
 round them. Fable shewed us mankind under  
 the guise of animals. Here the mask is taken off,  
 and

and allegory laid aside. Truth itself appears pure and undisguised; and if allegory does now and then appear, it is more the effect of the artist's skill, than any obligation imposed on him by his art; which, in this case, leaves the philosopher, or courtier, to dress up his thoughts in the manner he judges most proper; and confines it's rules wholly to the body of the allegory, which is the only part deemed truly pastoral.

### CHAP. I.

#### Of the nature of pastoral Poetry.

**P**astoral poetry may be defined on imitation of rural life represented with every possible attraction.

If this definition be a just one, it will at once put an end to the dispute which has arisen between the advocates for the antient pastoral, and those for the modern.

True pastoral does not consist in merely joining a few flowery chaplets to a subject, which, in itself, has nothing of rural; rural life itself must be represented, only adorned with all the graces of which it is susceptible; it is not enough to write about the country, the poet must give us what is agreeable in that scene, and hide what is wretched.

Pastoral pieces are called also Eclogues. Εἰκ-  
λόγη, in Greek, signifying a collection of choice  
pieces in whatsoever kind; authors have there-  
fore thought proper to give this name to the small  
poems,

poems on rural life, which are collected into one volume. Hence the Eclogues of Virgil, which signifies no more than a collection of his small pieces on pastoral life.

Sometimes they are termed Idylliums. Idyllium in Greek Εἰδύλλιον, signifies a small image, or piece of painting in miniature, in the soft and pleasing stile.

If there is any real difference between Idyllium and eclogue, it is but very trivial; authors frequently confounding the one with the other. Custom however has made it necessary to throw more action and business into the eclogue; whereas it is sufficient to the Idyllium, that it has it's images, narrations, and sentiments only.

#### The matter of pastoral Poetry.

According to our definition, the object or matter of pastoral, is the tranquil country life, with its attendants and consequences. This easy and peaceable situation, supposes a sufficient plenty, a state of perfect liberty, and a life of continual innocence and gaiety. It admits of the milder passions, such as are productive of tender complaints, amorous sonnets, poetical contests, and interesting narratives.

Pastoral is, properly speaking, a picture of the golden age, placed within the sphere of humanity, and divested of all that hyperbolical marvellous, with which the poets had loaded it in their descriptions. It is the reign of freedom, in-



nocent pleasures, peace, and the enjoyments which every man finds himself born to taste, when his passions will allow him some moments respite, to contemplate himself in silent reflection. In a word, it is the agreeable and easy retreat of him who has a pure and delicate soul, and has found the way to possess in himself the blessings of that happy age.

Quand le ciel liberal versoit à pleines mains,  
Tout ce dont l'abondance assouvit les humains,  
Et que le monde enfant n'avoit pour nourriture,  
Que les mets apprêtés par les soins de Nature.

When bounteous heav'n supply'd with liberal hand,  
All the first race of mortals could demand;  
And the young world made it's first wholesome feast,  
On the plain foods by nature's cookery drest.

All incidents in a country life, then, are not equally worthy of a place in pastoral. Such only are to be chosen as are of a pleasing or interesting nature; every thing that is rude, clownish, harsh and trivial, stands of consequence excluded; together with those minute details, which produce only flat and unmeaning images; in a word, every thing that is not either striking or tender. But such are more especially to be rejected, that partake of the horrid or tragical. A shepherd who hangs himself at his mistress's door, is by no means a pastoral object, because it is to be supposed, that those violent passions which lead to extremi-  
ties

ties of this kind, are intirely unknown in pastoral life.

The form of the pastoral.

Pastoral is not confined wholly to narration, but is at liberty to put on every other form that is to be met with in poetry. It shews us a society of men having their respective interests, and consequently passions, which, tho' more gentle and innocent than ours, are yet susceptible of the same characters in the hands of the poet; therefore shepherds may have their epic poems, their comedies, tragedies, operas, elegies, eclogues, idylliums, epigrams, inscriptions, allegories, funeral dirges, &c. and such we meet with in most writers of this class, antient and modern.

The character of shepherds.

We may easily form an idea of the character of shepherds from the habitations assigned them. There the fields are in continual verdure; the shade is always cool and refreshing, and the air healthy and pure: consequently, a pastoral life, with it's actions, should be always smiling and peaceable. But as their sky is sometimes overclouded, if only to vary the scene, and by genial showers, to enliven and refresh the verdure of the fields and groves, their characters should likewise have some mixture of the graver passions, purely to heighten their taste for happiness, and render

the enjoyment of the succeeding calm more exquisitely relishing.

Shepherds should be both delicate and natural, that is to say, there should be nothing disagreeable, affected or stiff in their behaviour or language. Nevertheless we may introduce them with good sense, and even with wit, provided this appears natural, and their manner of thinking be not too gallant or refined.

Their characters should be contrasted, at least in some places, for if they were so throughout, it would discover too much art.

They should all have a moral goodness. Poetical goodness is known to consist in the resemblance of the copy, with it's model. Thus in tragedy, Nero painted with all his cruelty, has a poetically good character.

Moral goodness is the conformity of the conduct, with what is, or is thought to be the rule and model for rectitude of manners. Shepherds should have this latter kind of goodness, as well as the former. A villain, a notorious impostor, or an assassin, would be a misplaced character in pastoral. A shepherd, when injured or offended, should accuse his own eyes, complain to the rocks and woods; or, like Alcidor in despair, fling himself into the flood; taking care however, not to be quite drowned.

Tho' the characters of all shepherds are nearly the same at the bottom, yet they are susceptible of great variation. For the whole train of passions  
may

may be raised from the single love of ease and innocent pleasures ; and fear, sorrow, hope, joy, love, friendship, hatred, generosity, jealousy, and pity, by only giving them the colour and degree of pastoral, will afford us so many different funds of matter, which may be again diversified according to difference of age, sex, place, incidents, &c.

#### Of the Pastoral Stile.

After what has been said on the nature of pastoral poetry, and the characters of the shepherds, we may easily figure to ourselves the kind of stile they should use.

In the first place, it must be plain and simple ; that is, only common terms are to be made use of, and those free from ostentation, false gloss, or an apparent design of pleasing.

It should be smooth. Smoothness can be better understood than explained ; it is a melting softness, mixed with delicacy and simplicity, either in the thoughts, the words, or the turns.

*Timarette s'en est allée :*

*L'ingrate meprisant mes soupirs & mes pleurs*

*Laisse mon ame desolée*

*A la merci de mes douleurs.*

*Je n'esperai jamais qu'un jour elle eût envie*

*De finir de mes maux le pitoyable cours ;*

*Mais je l'aimois plus que ma vie,*

*Et je la voyois tous les jours.*

SEGRAIS.



Now Phœbe is gone, and has left me behind,  
What a marvellous change of a sudden I find?

How slowly time creeps———

Methinks, if I knew whereabouts he would tread,  
I would breathe on his wings, and 'twould melt  
down the lead ;

Fly swifter, ye minutes, bring hither my dear,  
And rest so much longer for't, when she is here.

ADDISON.

It should be familiar. This term has been already defined under the article of fable.

Si vous voulez venir ô miracle des belles !  
Je vous enseignervis un nid de tourterelles.  
Je veux vous la donner pour gage de ma foi,  
Car on dit qu'elles sont fidelles comme moi.

SEGRAIS.

Come Rosalind, O come, for without thee,  
What pleasure can the country have for me ;  
Come, Rosalind, oh come ; my brindled kine,  
My snowy sheep, my farm and all are thine.

PHILIPS.

It should be elegant in its descriptions.

Qu'en ses plus beaux habits l'aurore au teint vermeil  
Annonce à l'univers le retour du soleil,  
Et que devant son char ses legeres suivantes  
Ouvrent de l'orient les portes éclatantes ;  
Depuis que ma Bergere a quitté ces beaux lieux,  
Le ciel n'a plus ni jour, ni clarté pour mes yeux.

SEGRAIS.

Tho

Thus Englished :

Tho' the gay morn, in gold and purple drest,  
Unbars the portals of the glowing east ;  
And to the world, involv'd in dusky night,  
Gives the glad tidings of approaching light ;  
And bright Apollo's nimble footed train,  
The dancing hours, attend him to the plain ;  
These glories have no lustre for my eye,  
'Tis cheerless gloom, if Chloris is not by.

Shepherds have their familiar phrases and comparisons, which they chiefly make use of, when at a loss for other expressions; as for instance,

*Comme en hauteur ce saules excède les fougères  
Araminte en beauté surpasse nos bergères.*

SEGRAIS.

As much as fairest lillies can surpass  
A thorn in beauty, or in height the grass,  
So does my love all other maids excel.

POPE.

And analogies;

*Il m'appelloit sa sœur je l'appellois mon frere,  
Nous mangions même pain au logis de mon pere ;  
Cependant qu'il y fut, nous vecumes ainsi,  
Tout ce que je voulois, il le vouloit aussi.*

SEGRAIS.

And frequent repetitions ;

*Pan a soin des brebis, Pan a soin des pasteurs  
Et Pan me peut venger de tous vos rigneurs.* SEGRAIS.  
*Phillis the hazle loves, whilst Phillis loves that tree,  
Myrtles than hazles, of less fame shall be.* DRYD.

In other kinds of poetry, repetition is generally made use of to enliven the stile; here it

seems to be the pure effect of indolence, because they will not be at the pains of seeking for other expressions.

They likewise prefer some well known signs in nature to the use of common names of persons or things. Thus to tell us it is noon, they say,

The sheep in shades avoid the parching plain.

DRYDEN:

And thus on the approach of evening ;

———— The sun is sinking to the main,  
And taller shadows stretch along the plain. Idem.

They are generally minute in their descriptions, the subject being sometimes a cup, a basket, or the like.

Philips thus describes a sheep-hook,

Of season'd elm, where studs of brass appear,  
To speak the giver's name, the month and year ;  
The hook of polish'd steel, the handle turned,  
And richly by the graver's skill adorned. PHILIPS.

And are fond of expatiating on the most trivial circumstances ; thus the shepherd in Racan expresses himself.

Il me passoit d'un an, & de ses petits bras,  
Cueilloit déjà des fruits dans les branches d'embas.

Oftentimes these descriptions only serve to paint the excessive leisure of a shepherd's life. Nothing else can excuse Theocritus for employing  
ing

ing so many verses in describing the number of figures carved on a cup.

In general every thing should be avoided on the pastoral stile, that carries the appearance of study and application, labour or pain. But as the language and actions of these shepherds are given them by men of wit and learning, it is scarcely possible these should so totally divest themselves of their natural qualifications, as not to shine out now and then; nevertheless pastoral may sometimes rise in its stile. Theocritus, Virgil, Pope and Segrais, have treated of the sublimest subjects; others have a right to do the same; and these great examples answer all objections. But yet the nature of pastoral seems somewhat confined in itself. There may indeed be supposed different degrees of wit and understanding among shepherds, which will consequently vary the strain of the poem. But if they are represented with an imagination, as bold and copious as those who have had their education in cities and large towns, they may be called shepherds, if you please, but we shall never be brought to look upon them as such.

Shepherds may, indeed, form conceptions of the greatest things; but then they should do it with a kind of diffidence; and when they speak of them, it should be with that air of wonder and surprize, that may discover their native sim-



plicity, in the midst of the most pompous narration. We have a fine instance of this in Virgil's first eclogue.

Fool that I was, I thought imperial Rome  
 Like Mantua, where on market days we come,  
 And thither drive our tender lambs from home;  
 So kids and whelps their fires and dames express;  
 And so the great I measur'd by the less.  
 But country towns, compar'd with her, appear  
 Like shrubs, when lofty cypresses are near. (a)

DRYDEN.

Or if they will raise their voices to some more elevated theme, and sing of the creation of the world, prophecy of future events, and the like, let them always remember to introduce some rural deity in their song; such as Pan, old Silenus, or the gleeful Faunus.

Shepherds have not only their poetry, but have also their dances, their music, their decorations, feasts, and architecture, if we may give that name to woods, groves, hillocks, hamlets and cottages. Simplicity, softness, and a lively gaiety is the fundamental character of these;

---

(a) Urbem, quam dicunt Romam, Melibæe putavi,  
 Stultus ego huic nostræ similem, quo sæpe solemus  
 Pastores ovium, teneros depellere fœtus,  
 Sic canibus catulos similes, sic matribus hædos,  
 Noram: sic parvis componere magna solebam,  
 Verum hæc tantum alias inter caput extulit urbes,  
 Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.

and,

and, if it is true, that at all times an adept in the arts can, from one single art, form a judgment of all the rest; or, as Seneca has expressed it, judge of all the arts, by the setting out of a fable; then certainly the ruddy fruits, the chestnuts, the clouted milk, and the bed of leaves which Tityrus prides himself upon, to Melibœus, may give us as just an idea of the dances, songs, and feasts of the shepherds, as of their poetry.

Boileau, in his art of poetry, compares these very elegantly to a chaplet of wild flowers, gathered by a shepherdess to adorn herself on a holiday.

Telle qu'une Bergere au plus beau jour de fête,  
De superbes rubis ne charge point sa tête,  
Et sans mêler à l'or l'éclat des diamants,  
Cueille en un champ voisin les plus beaux ornemens  
Telle aimable en son air, mais humble dans son  
style,

Doit eclater sans pompe une elegante idylle.  
Son tour simple & naïf n'a rien de fastueux,  
Et n'aime point l'orgueil d'un vers presomptueux,  
Il faut que sa douceur flatte, chatouille, eveille.  
Et jamais de grands mots n'épouvante l'oreille;  
Mais souvent dans ce style un rimeur aux abois,  
Jette là de dépit la flûte & l'hautbois;  
Et follement pompeux dans sa verve indiscrete,  
Au milieu d'une eclogue entonne la trompette.  
De peur de l'écouter Pan fuit dans les roseaux  
Et les nimphes d'effroi se cachent sous les eaux  
Au contraire, cet abject en son langage,  
Fait parler ses bergers, comme on parle au village.

Ses vers plats & grossiers, depouillés d'agrement  
 Toujours, baissent la tête & rampent tristement.  
 Entre ces deux excès la route est difficile;  
 Suivez pour la trouver Théocrite & Virgile.  
 Que leurs tendres écrits, par les graces dictés,  
 Ne quittent point vos mains, jour & nuit feuilletés;  
 Seuls par leurs doctes vers ils pourront vous apprendre  
 Par quel art, sans bassesse, un auteur peut descendre.  
 Chanter Flora, les champs, Pomone & les vergers,  
 Au combat de la flute animer deux bergers; &c.

BOIL. *Art. Poet. Chant. II.*

*Thus Englished:*

As on a gaudy day, some shepherds  
 Does not her head with sparkling diamonds dress;  
 But, without gold, or pearl, or costly scents,  
 Gathers from neighb'ring fields her ornaments:  
 So, unaffected, is the pastoral strain,  
 Fair without pomp, and elegantly plain.  
 Its humble method nothing has of fierce,  
 And hates the ratling of the tragic verse:  
 There, native beauty pleases, and excites,  
 And never with harsh sounds the ear affrights.  
 But in this stile a rhymers often spent,  
 In rage throws by his rural instrument,  
 And vainly, when disorder'd thoughts abound,  
 Amidst the eclogue makes the trumpet sound:  
 Pan flies alarm'd into the neighb'ring woods,  
 And frightened nymphs dive down into the floods.  
 Another, in an abject clownish style,  
 Makes Shepherds speak a language base and vile:  
 His stupid writings most profoundly creep,  
 Barren of wit, provocatives of sleep.

'Twixt these extremes, 'tis hard to please the town ;  
Make Virgil and Theocritus your own,  
And equally avoid the courtier and the clown.  
Be their soft lines, by every grace inspir'd,  
Your constant pattern, practis'd and admir'd.  
By them alone you'll quickly comprehend,  
How poets without shame may condescend,  
To sing of gardens, fields, of flow'rs and fruit,  
To stir up shepherds with the tuneful flute.

## C H A P. II.

## The Origin of Pastoral.

**I**F we allow the pastoral to owe its birth to shepherds, it must certainly be the most antient species of poetry. The profession of a shepherd being the most agreeable and natural to man, and was, in fact, the first he ever exercised. It is easy to conceive, that men finding themselves the peaceable possessors of the earth, which offered them in abundance every thing necessary to supply their necessities, and flatter their taste, naturally turned their thoughts towards shewing their gratitude to the sovereign benefactor ; and in the fervency of their devotion, called on the floods, the meadows, the mountains, the woods, and on every object that nature presented, to join in the graceful song. This first hymn of acknowledgment over, they celebrated in their songs the tranquility, the happiness of their own condition. This is precisely the subject of pastoral poetry, viz.



viz. man in a state of happiness.—This transition was quick and natural.

Pastoral songs, descriptions, relations in verse, and poetic disputations, had, doubtless, been celebrated each in it's time, long before Theocritus. But when other works of this kind more perfect and finished appeared, the former were buried in oblivion, and these new master-pieces in their way, served as a fresh æra or date in pastoral history; beyond which it is not worth the pains to trace it. In this manner Homer came to be esteemed the father of the epic, Eschylus of tragedy, Esop of fable, Pindar of lyric poetry, and Theocritus of pastoral. Besides, it is something pleasing to find this latter take its rise on the borders of Anapus, in the vallies of Elorus, where the mild zephyrs continually wanton round, where the scene is ever gay and blooming, and the air refreshed by gentle breezes from the neighbouring sea. What nursery more worthy of the pastoral muse, whose character is all gentleness and softness!

### CH A P. III.

Characters of the most eminent pastoral writers among the antients.

### THEOCRITUS.

**T**heocritus was born at Syracuse, and flourished about 270 years before Christ. In his Idylliums, nature is painted with a graceful simplicity. His works might be regarded as the shep-

shepherds library, if they were permitted to have one. They contain an infinite number of strokes proper to form the most amiable pastoral characters. It is true, some of them might have been more delicate, and others again appear too simple, and rather bordering on the homely; but in general there is a degree of sweetness, delicacy and softness, which none of his successors have been able to attain, but have found themselves reduced to copy him almost literally, not having sufficiency of genius ever to imitate him. His imagery may be compared to a fruit, exquisitely glowing with all the morning freshness, and that vast effusion of colour left on it by the dew. His versification is admirable, full of fire, well stored with images, and such a peculiar melody in it, as gives him an incontestable superiority over all other writers of the same class.

Those readers who have not the opportunity, or means of judging from the original, may, at least, be enabled to form some faint idea from the passages we shall here select, as translated by Mr. Duke.

The poet undertakes, in his eleventh Idyllium, to convince his friend, that there is no other way of curing the passions, than by study and labour, and points him out the example of the Cyclops Polypheme.

Thus the sad Cyclops Polyphemus strove,  
To soften his uneasy hours of love;

Then

Then when soft youth urg'd him to fierce desire,  
 And Galatea's eyes kindled the raging fire ;  
 His was no common flame, nor could he move  
 In the old arts, and beaten paths of love ;  
 Nor flowers, nor fruits sent to oblige the fair,  
 Nor more to please, curl'd his neglected hair ;  
 His was all rage and madness ; to his mind,  
 No other cares their wonted entrance find ;  
 Oft from the field his flocks return'd alone,  
 Unheeded, unobserved : he on some stone,  
 Or craggy cliff, to the deaf winds and sea,  
 Accusing Galatea's cruelty ;  
 Till night from the first opening dawn of day,  
 Consumes with inward heat and melts away ;  
 Yet then a cure, the only cure he found,  
 And thus apply'd it to the bleeding wound ;  
 From a steep rock, from whence he might survey,  
 The flood, the bed where his lov'd sea nymph lay,  
 His drooping head with sorrow bent he hung,  
 And thus his grief calm'd with his mournful song.

Fair Galatea, why is all my pain  
 Rewarded thus ? soft love with sharp disdain ?  
 Fairer than falling snow, or rising light,  
 Soft to the touch, as charming to the sight ;  
 Sprightly as unyok'd heifers, on whose head,  
 The tender crescents but begin to spread ;  
 Yet cruel you to harshness more encline,  
 Than unripe grapes pluck'd from the savage vine ;  
 Soon as my heavy eyelid's seal'd with sleep,  
 Neither you come from out the foaming deep ;  
 But when sleep leaves me, you together fly,  
 And vanish swiftly from my opening eye,  
 Swift as young lambs, when the fierce wolf they spy.

I well

I well remember the first fatal day,  
That made my heart your beauty's easy prey ;  
'Twas when the flood you, with my mother left,  
Of all its brightness, all it's pride bereft ;  
To gather flowers from the steep mountain's top,  
Of the high office proud, I led you up ;  
To hyacinths and roses did you bring,  
And shew'd you all the treasures of the spring.  
But from that hour my soul has known no rest,  
Soft peace is banish'd from my tortur'd breast.  
I rage, I burn——

• • • • •  
Ah, nymph, by ev'ry grace adorn'd, I know  
Why you despise and fly the Cyclops so ;  
Because a shaggy brow from side to side,  
Stretch'd in a line does my large forehead hide,  
And under that one only eye does shine,  
And my flat nose to my thick lip does join ;  
Such tho' I am, yet know a thousand sheep,  
The pride of the Sicilian hills I keep ;  
With sweetest milk they fill my flowing pails,  
And my vast stock of cheeses never fails ;  
In summer's heat, or winter's sharpest cold,  
My loaded shelves groan with the weight they hold.  
Yet more with such soft notes I can inspire,  
The thrill pipe, that the Cyclops all admire ;  
While with it oftē I all night proclaim  
Thy powerful charms, and my succeſsleſs flame ;  
For thee, twelve does all big with fawn I feed,  
And four bear's cubs, tame to thy hand I breed.  
Ah, come to me, fair nymph, and you shall find,  
These are the smallest gifts for thee design'd.  
Ah ! come and leave the angry waves to roar,  
And break themselves against the sounding shoar ;

How



How much more pleasant wou'd thy slumbers be,  
In the retir'd and peaceful cave with me ?  
There the streight cypress and green laurel join,  
And creeping ivy clasps the clust'ring vine ;  
Those fresh cool privy, from *Ætna's* purest snow,  
Dissolv'd into ambrosial liquor flow.  
Who the wild waves, and brackish sea would chuse,  
And these still shades, and these sweet streams refuse ?  
But if you fear that I, o'ergrown with hair,  
Without a fire defy the winter air,  
Know I have mighty stores of wood, and know,  
Prepetual fires on my bright hearth do glow ;  
My soul, my life itself should burn for thee,  
And this one eye as dear as Life to me.  
Why was I not with fins like fishes made,  
That I, like them, might in the deep have play'd ?  
Then would I dive beneath the yielding tide,  
And kiss your hands if you your lips deny'd :  
But I'm resolv'd I'll learn to swim and dive,  
Of the next stranger that doth here arrive ;  
That th' undiscover'd pleasures I may know,  
Which you enjoy in the deep flood below.  
Come forth, O nymph, and coming forth forget,  
Like me, that on this rock unmindful sit  
(Of all things else unmindful but of thee)  
Hence to return, forget, and live with me.  
With me the sweet and pleasing labour chuse,  
To feed the flock, and milk the burthen'd ewes,  
To press the cheese, and the sharp rennet to infuse. }  
My Mother does unkindly use her son,  
By her neglect the Cyclops is undone ;  
For me she never labours to prevail,  
Nor whispers in your ear my amorous tale.

No ; tho' she knows I languish ev'ry day,  
 And sees my body waste, and strength decay ;  
 But I more ill than what I feel will feign,  
 And of my head, and of my feet complain,  
 That in her breast if any pity lye.  
 She may be sad and griev'd as well as I.

Cyclops, ah ! Cyclops, where's thy reason fled ?  
 If your young lambs with new pluck'd bough you fed ;  
 And watch'd your flock, wou'd you not seem more wise,  
 Milk what is next, pursue not that which flies.  
 Perhaps you may since this proves so unkind,  
 Another fairer Galetea find.  
 Me many virgins as I pass invite,  
 To waste with them in love's soft sports the night ;  
 And if I but incline my list'ning ear,  
 New joys, new smiles in all their works appear :  
 Thus we, it seems, can be believ'd, and we,  
 It seems are somebody as well as she.

Thus did the Cyclops fan his raging fire,  
 And sooth'd with gentle verse his fierce desire ;  
 Thus pass'd his hours with more delight and ease,  
 Than if the riches of the world were his.

DUKE'S *Transf. of* THEOC.

A little attention in the examination of this piece, will give in a sufficient idea of the extensive art and genius of the poet.

*Oft from the fields his flocks return'd alone.*] This incident is at once strong and natural ; it shews their master by he totally absorbed in sorrow.

*From a sleep rock, &c.*] This image fixes our imagination by pointing out the very situation of the shepherd ; he was incessantly eying the sea,  
 for

for there resided his beloved nymph Galathea ; in this lies the delicacy of the circumstance.

*Fairer than, &c.*] This turn is truly pastoral ; comparisons or similes are the most ready way of expression for such as have but confined ideas. We make use of them ourselves every day, when our ideas fall short of the things we would describe, or that we are speaking to people of a slow comprehension.

*I led you up.*] This is a pleasing circumstance, and dear to the shepherd ; he has recalled it to his remembrance a thousand times over, he repeats it yet again.

*Because a shaggy brow*] The person of Polyphemus was certainly but badly cut out for a picture ; yet, in his simplicity, he draws one of himself, and makes it as like as possible. Surely then he may be allowed to boast his rural riches, and his talents for the lyre. No shepherd has a better voice than himself, which he often employs in singing the charmer he adores, till midnight surprises him in the pleasing task.

*And four bear-cubs tame to thy hand I breed*] This single stroke is itself an exact picture of his manners, and agrees very well with that he had just before drawn of his person.

*There the streight cypress and the laurel join*] The whole of this description is very pleasing ; but what is chiefly to be remarked in it is, its being introduced by a sentiment, and as an instrument

to

to the shepherd's design of enticing his beloved nymph to quit her watry habitation.

*Come forth, O nymph, and coming forth forget, &c.]* What sweetness, what delicacy is here! what force and energy in the words, *forget as I do*. He himself gives the nymph the example, he was forgetting all for her.

*Cyclops, ah Cyclops!]* Here Polyphemus returns to himself; he resumes his reason in the midst of his despair, and makes a truly wise resolution; for which he is indebted to the concurrence of his own understanding, his resentment and his pride. Three motives, which are frequently all necessary to bring men back to a just way of thinking.

The life of poetical shepherds is one continued scene of indolence and care, to enliven which they are sometimes wont to urge each other with reciprocal challenges, which produce what we call poetic combats.

Theocritus has brought two combatants of this kind on the stage in his 8th Idyllium.

As the shepherd Menalcas was feeding his flocks on the mountains, he chanced to meet the agreeable Daphnis, who was also tending his flocks in the same place. Both swains were handsome, both young, each played with skill upon his oaten reed, and were alike expert in song.

Menalcas,



Menalcas, having first espied Daphnis, made him the proposal of entering the lists with him. The challenge is accepted, the pledges deposited, and the contest begins.

*M.* Ye vales, ye springs that flow from distant seas,  
If e'er the sweet Menalcas songs did please,  
Then feed my lambs ; if Daphnis drives his kine  
To graze them here, feed his as well as mine.

*D.* Ye herbs and flowers, ye glory of the vales,  
If Daphnis songs are sweet as nightingales,  
Then feed my herds ; if thro' the flow'ry mead  
Menalcas drives, then let his lambs be fed.

*M.* There pastures flourish, there the dugs to fill,  
The lambs are suckled, and the shepherds smile,  
Where my boy comes ; but when he leaves the place,  
The shepherd withers o'er the fading grass.

*D.* There sheep, there goats bear twins, there lab'ring  
Bees

Do fill their hives, and there rise prouder trees,  
Where Mido treads, but when he leaves the place,  
The herds-man withers, and the herd decays.

*M.* O ! goat, the white kid's husband, stately oaks ;  
O ! flat-nos'd kids, make haste to purling Brooks !  
For there he is, go, let the boy be show'd,  
That Proteus fed his sea calves, tho' a god.

*D.* Not Pelop's land, not heaps of gold refin'd  
I wish, nor swiftness to outstrip the wind ;  
But let me sit and sing by yonder rock,  
Clasp thee, my dear, and view my feeding flock.

*M.* Rough storms to trees, to birds th'treacherous snare,  
Are frightful evils, springes to the hare,  
Soft virgins love to man ; oh ! mighty jove,  
Not I alone, but thou hast stoop'd to love !

Thus

Thus sang the youth by turns, and pleas'd the swain,  
And thus Menalcas the last part began.

M. Wolf, spare my lambs, and let them safely bleat,  
For I am little, and my fold is great.

How, white-foot, how so soon, so fast asleep ?

Is this your care, do you thus watch my sheep ?

I faith, you shall not sleep, when one so young

As I am, shepherd, and engag'd in song ;

But feed, dear flock, and crop the flow'ry plain.

Feed, never fear, the grass will grow again ;

Fill well your dugs, that when night spreads her veil ;

The lambs may suck, and I may fill my pail.

And next fair Daphnis sang —

D. And as I drove my herd, a lovely maid

Stood peeping from a cave ; she smil'd, and said,

Daphnis is lovely, ah ! a lovely youth ;

What smiles, what graces sit upon his mouth !

I made no sharp returns, but hung my head,

And went my way, yet pleas'd with what she said.

Winds sweetly murmur, the steer sweetly lows,

Sweet is the heifer's voice, and sweet the cow's,

'Tis sweet to lie in shades, by purling streams,

In summer's heat, dissolv'd in easy dreams.

Acorns the oaks, and grass commends the plain ;

Fat calves do grace the cows, and cows the swain.

Thus sang the shepherds, when the goatherd,  
they had pitched upon as umpire, thus pronounced  
his decision.

“ Oh Daphnis, how ravishing is thy voice !

“ it is more pleasing to listen to your strains, O

“ sweeter far, than to suck honey from the yel-

“ low comb : take the prize, I declare you

“ victor.

“ victor. The young shepherd leaped for joy,  
 “ he danced and clapped his hands: one would  
 “ have thought it had been a tender kid fro-  
 “ licking round his dam.”

The Idyllium of the two fishermen gives us a fine image of poverty, accompanied with innocence, and a purity of manners. This piece is in a quite different taste from those of Mr. Fontenelle, who indeed affects to treat it with great indifference, in the description he gives of it, which is as follows: “ Two fishermen, says he, “ having made but a sorry supper, lay themselves “ down together in a wretched hovel by the sea- “ side. One of them waking the other to tell “ him, that he has just dreamt he had caught “ a golden fish: to which his companion replies, “ that he may starve for hunger, notwithstand- “ ing his fine fishing-bout. Was this a subject “ worth making an Idyllium?” One might readily answer Mr. Fontenelle, that nothing is so easy as to debase, and even turn into ridicule the very best and most beautiful productions, by a false or partial analysis of them. Pray what is the Iliad itself? two petty kings, each chief of a paltry scrap of ground, fall together by the ears about a wench; one of them turns fullen upon it, and goes off blubbering to his quarters; at last, however, the other is obliged to find him out, ask his pardon, and make it up. Is this a subject to write an Iliad on? or, to come nearer to Mr. Fontenelle, and borrow an example from his

own

own works ; a whole village turns out to dance, except one clown, who refuses to join the rest, because his sweet-heart does not happen to be there. Is this a subject for a complaint through upwards of an hundred verses ? there is a wide difference between canvas and embroidery, between a design in crayons and a complete picture ; and whoever attempts to pass the one on us for the other, offers an insult to our understanding. And surely nothing is a clearer proof of the great merit of Theocritus, than his having been able to raise such beautiful flowers from a soil which appeared so dry and barren to one of the brightest geniusses of our age. For the reader's satisfaction we hear subjoin the translation of this Idyllium.

## IDYLLIUM XXI.

A dialogue between two fishermen on a dream.

Two good old fishers slept : their bed was sedge,  
 Their roof was straw, their walls a rotten hedge ;  
 Yet bless'd they liv'd, and happy in content,  
 With their companions poverty and want :  
 No neighbour near, and ev'ry rising tide,  
 Their hovel reach'd, and shook its tott'ring side ;  
 From midst of heaven the moon view'd all below,  
 When dreams of labor wak'd the sleeping two ;  
 Each with his thumb rubb'd rest from off his eyes,  
 And sang and cheer'd themselves with these replies.  
*A.* They lye, dear Friend, that say the night decays  
 When summer comes, and Jove brings longer days ;



For I have seen a thousand dreams to night,  
Long tedious dreams, and yet 'tis far from light.

*B.* You blame the summer, but unjustly blame,  
The hours are still forc'd on, their pace the same;  
But vexing cares, that in a busy throng  
Disturb your Head, do make night seem so long.

*A.* Can you interpret dreams, friend, tell me true?  
I've dreamt fine things, which I would tell to you;  
For that will ease me, and divert my care,  
As we our fish, so we our dreams will share.

*B.* Then tell thy friend. *A.* If you remember well,  
We sup'd too late, and made a sparing meal:

On yonder shelving rock methought I stood,  
And stoop'd, intent upon the quiet flood;  
I saw the fish, my hook let gently down,  
And shook my cheating bait to draw them on.

A great one bit, (for fish is still my theme,  
As dogs of bones, so I of fishes dream)  
I strook, and hung him fast, I saw the blood,  
The weight was great, I'm sure it bent the rod;  
I strove to reach him, for my line was weak,  
And, faith, I fear'd my bending hook would break.  
Dost prick me, (for he prick'd) I'll grasp thee more,  
And so at last I drew my prey to shore,

A golden fish, I stood amaz'd, and fear'd  
'Twas one of Neptune's own beloved herd;  
Or one of sea-green Amphitrite's train,  
A noble fish, the treasure of the main.  
I loos'd him gently, and did strictly look,  
That no small grain stuck round the barbed hook:  
With cords I drew him, and devoutly swore,  
That I would venture out to sea no more;  
But stay at home, and make myself a king,  
At this I wak'd: do you adjust the thing.

Pray

Pray tell me what you think, for I am afraid,  
That I am bound to keep the oath I made.

*B.* Fear not, my friend, you did not swear ; for why,  
You found no fish, a dream's at most a lye ?  
And therefore go, and draw the usual streams,  
Seek real fish, nor starve with golden dreams.

CREECH.

This Idyllium has been praised on the same principle as we praise a fine landscape ; virtuosi in painting do not confine their admiration to those pieces only that present us with Alexanders and Achilles ; and with respect to images, it is not always the object that strikes us, but the happy execution of the art itself. Besides, this picture of the fishermen is pleasing, from the very plainness and simplicity of it, and for that stile of innocence which runs through every part, as well as the importance of the moral it conveys to the mind. What can be more apt than the description of the poverty of these two men ! a poverty they appear to be contented with, and within which they seem to bound all their desires. The simplicity, and even childishness of him that has the dream, is very strongly figured in his way of reasoning, and manner of telling his dream, and especially in the scruples he has on the oath he made in his sleep. His companion instructs him with tenderness, and removes his fears and scruples with the greatest goodness of heart.

As for such who expect to meet every where with romantic descriptions; refined sentiments, and metaphysical love-cant, they will find themselves greatly disappointed in this piece, as it is entirely void of that stimulus, with which they expect their tastes to be every now and then raised. But let me advise these gentlemen to cast their eyes on the literary productions of the brightest ages, let them reckon up all those that are, and have been indispensably acknowledged great artists, and they will see how much this pretended excellence of taste has betrayed them, how much it has impoverished their talents; and if after all this they remain insensible to their loss, why let them go and make themselves amends with Seneca, Pliny, and their ingenious descendants, who, endeavouring like themselves to surpass nature in the arts, laid the first foundation of their decline and ruin.

#### M O S C H U S and B I O N.

These two poets flourished some time after Theocritus. The first was famous in Sicily, the other at Smyrna in Ionia. The former, to judge by what few remaining pieces we have of his, seems to have added a certain art to the eclogue, which it before was a stranger to, and appears in his works, with more neatness, more taste, and less negligence. But perhaps what it has gained in exactness it has lost in simplicity! which is certainly

tainly the very soul of pastoral. His woods seem rather regular groves; and his fountains artificial. He writes, if not in a different kind from Theocritus, at least in a different way in the same kind. In his pastorals we meet with few shepherds, but they abound with ingenious allegories, flowery narrations, and laboured panegyrics.

Nothing can be more elegant and lively than his Idyllium, the rape of Europa; as will appear from the following extracts.

“ As soon as the princess and her companions  
“ arrived in the enamelled meads, they dispersed,  
“ and each fell to gathering the flowers that  
“ pleased her most; one plucked the sweet smelling narcissus; another the purple hyacinth; one  
“ chose the violet, and another the low creeping  
“ thyme, delightful for its fragrance. Thus  
“ they went on, reaping all the riches of the  
“ spring. Some again strove with each other  
“ for the marygold, glowing with gold and crimson. But the fair hands of the princess were  
“ wholly employed in gathering the blushing  
“ roses; she appeared in the midst of her companions like Venus surrounded with the  
“ graces.”

Jupiter, in the shape of a bull, presents himself before her, and lays himself down at her feet; and as he turns back his head to look at her, artfully displays the broadness of his large back . . . .



“ O come hither! come hither! dear com-  
“ panions, cries Europa; let us try, for our di-  
“ version, to get upon the back of this animal,  
“ who seems so innocent and gentle; we may  
“ all be seated on it as much at our ease as in  
“ a large vessel . . . . She said, and smiling,  
“ seated herself on its back. The rest prepared  
“ to follow her example, but the beast suddenly  
“ rising up, carries off the princess, and makes  
“ towards the sea with his beauteous charge.  
“ Europa stretches out her arms to her compa-  
“ nions; she calls on them, but alas! they strive  
“ in vain to come up with her. The bull  
“ plunges into the midst of the waves; bearing  
“ proudly on; you would have thought it had  
“ been a dolphin. When suddenly appeared  
“ the Nereids, issuing from the waves, and seat-  
“ ed on the backs of sea-monsters, to serve him  
“ as attendants. The dread god of the sea him-  
“ self, Neptune, became his brother’s guide,  
“ and smoothed the rugged paths of his watry  
“ empire, for his passage. The Tritons, inha-  
“ bitants of the profound deeps, gathering a-  
“ round them, celebrated with their large couches  
“ the hymeneal union. The princess, still seat-  
“ ed on the back of the divine bull, supported  
“ herself by one of his horns with one hand,  
“ while with the other she let fall her purple  
“ robe over her; the borders of it were wet  
“ with the swelling flood. Her veil filled, and  
“ borne

“ borne out by the wind, resembled a sail, and  
“ seemed to bear her from the shore, &c.”

Bion carried this farther than Moschus, he has made a third sort of Idyllium, more embellished than that of the latter; we every where perceive a desire to please, but it is sometimes tinged with affectation. His death of Adonis, which is esteemed so beautiful and affecting, has some antitheses which appear mere witticisms.

#### The death of ADONIS.

Adonis was the son of Cinyras king of Cyprus, and of Cinyra his own daughter. He was so beautiful, that Venus conceived designs upon him. One day as he was hunting in the mountains, he was wounded by a wild boar, of which he died. There were funeral games instituted to his honor, which spread through all Asia and Egypt, and from thence into Greece. The prophet Ezekiel, chap. viii. v. 14. takes notice of certain women sitting by the way-side and weeping for Adonis. We find a description of these feasts in Lucian; “ They bemoan themselves, striking their breasts, and making a heavy mourning, after which they proceed to the celebration of his obsequies.” According to Theocritus, Adonis was represented in funeral pomp, on a kind of bed of state, surrounded by winged cupids, and other fabulous devices, and was bewailed by the by-standers, as if he had died but that very day.

The work we are about to take under our examination, was evidently composed to be sung in this kind of funeral feast. And as we have elsewhere remarked, that in this kind of writing, works of all denominations may have a place, provided they preserve their pastoral strain; therefore this piece may be regarded as a pastoral elegy.

On the death of ADONIS.

The death of fair Adonis I deplore;  
The lovely youth Adonis is no more:  
The cruel fates have cut his vital thread,  
And all the loves lament Adonis dead.  
Ah Venus! never more in purpled rest;  
For mournful sable change thy flowery vest;  
Thy beauteous bosom beat, thy loss deplore,  
Aloud with sighs, Adonis is no more!

For the lov'd youth these copious tears I shed,  
And all the Cupids mourn Adonis dead.

Methinks I see him on the mountain lie,  
The boar's keen tusk has pierc'd his tender thigh;  
Weltering he lies, expiring on the ground,  
And near him Venus all in sorrow drown'd;  
I see the crimson flood fast trickling flow  
Down his white skin that vyes with winter-snow;  
I see the lustre of his eyes decay.  
And on his lips the roses fade away:  
Yet who can Venus from those lips divide,  
Though their sweet kisses with Adonis died?  
To Venus sweet, ev'n now his breath is fled,  
Yet all her kisses cannot warm the dead.

The fate of fair Adonis I deplore ;

The loves lament, Adonis is no more !

A deep wide wound is in his thigh imprest,  
But Venus bears a deeper in her breast.

His beagles round a mournful howling keep ;

And all the Dryads of the mountains weep :

But Venus, quite abandon'd to despair,

Her locks dishevell'd, and her feet all bare,

Flies through the thorny brake, the briary wood,

And stains the thickets with her sacred blood :

With piercing cries Adonis she bewails,

Her darling youth, along the winding vales ;

While the blood, starting from his wounded thigh,

Streams on his breast, and leaves a crimson dye.

Ah me ! what tears fair Cytherea shed,

And how the loves deplor'd Adonis dead !

The queen of love, no longer now a bride,

Has lost her beauty since Adonis died ;

Though bright the radiance of her charms before,

Her lover and her beauty are no more !

The mountains mourn, the waving woods bewail,

And rivers roll lamenting through the vale ;

The silver springs descend in streams of woe,

Down the high hills, and murmur as they flow :

And every flower in drooping grief appears

Depress'd, and languishingly drown'd in tears :

While Venus o'er the hills and valleys flies,

And, " Ah ! Adonis is no more," she cries.

Along the hills, and vales, and vocal shore,

Echo repeats, " Adonis is no more."

Who could unmov'd these piteous wailings hear,

Or view the love-lorn queen without a tear ?

Soon as she saw him wounded on the plain,

His thigh discolour'd with the crimson stain,



Sighing she said, and clasp'd him as he lay,

" O stay, dear hapless youth ! for Venus stay !

" Our breasts once more let close embraces join,

" And let me press my glowing lips to thine.

" Raise, lov'd Adonis, raise thy drooping head,

" And kiss me ere thy parting breath be fled,

" The last fond token of affection give,

" O ! kiss thy Venus, while the kisses live ;

" Till in my breast I draw thy lingering breath,

" And with my lips imbibe thy love in death.

" This farewell kiss, which sorrowing thus I take,

" I'll keep for ever for Adonis' sake.

" Thee to the shades the fates untimely bring,

" Before the drear, inexorable king ;

" Yet still I live unhappy and forlorn ;

" How hard my lot to be a goddess born !

" Take, cruel Proserpine, my lovely boy,

" Since all that's form'd for beauty, or for joy,

" Descends to thee, while I indulge my grief,

" By fruitless tears soliciting relief.

" Thou dy'st, Adonis, and thy fate I weep,

" Thy love now leaves me, like a dream in sleep,

" Leaves me bereav'd, no more a blooming bride,

" With unavailing Cupids at my side.

" With thee my zone, which coldest hearts could

" warm,

" Lost every grace, and all its power to charm.

" Why didst thou urge the chace, and rashly dare,

" T' encounter beasts, thyself so wond'rous fair !"

Thus Venus mourn'd, and tears incessant shed,

And all the loves bewail'd Adonis dead ;

Sighing they cry'd, " Ah ! wretched queen deplore,

" Thy joys all fled, Adonis is no more."

As many drops of blood, as from the wound  
Of fair Adonis trickled on the ground,  
So many tears she shed in copious showers :  
Both tears and drops of blood were turn'd to flowers;  
From these in crimson beauty sprung the rose,  
Cerulean-bright anemonies from those.

The death of fair Adonis I deplore,  
The lovely youth Adonis is no more.

No longer in lone woods lament the dead,  
O queen of love ! behold the stately bed,  
On which Adonis, now depriv'd of breath,  
Seems sunk in slumbers, beauteous ev'n in death.  
Dress him, fair goddess, in the softest vest,  
In which he oft with thee dissolv'd to rest ;  
On golden pillow be his head reclin'd,  
And let past joys be imagin'd in thy mind.  
Though death the beauty of his bloom devours,  
Crown him with chaplets of the fairest flowers ;  
Alas ! the flowers have lost their gaudy pride,  
With him they flourish'd, and with him they died ;  
With odorous myrtle deck his drooping head,  
And o'er his limbs the sweetest essence shed :  
Ah ! rather perish every rich perfume,  
The sweet Adonis perish'd in his bloom.  
Clad in a purple robe Adonis lies ;  
Surrounding Cupids heave their breasts with sighs ;  
Their locks they shear, excess of grief to show,  
They spurn the quiver, and they break the bow,  
Some loose his sandals with officious care,  
Some in capacious golden vessels bear,  
The cleansing water from the crystal springs ;  
This bathes his wound, that fans him with his wings :

## 324. THE PRINCIPLES

For Venus' sake the pitying Cupids shed  
A shower of tears, and mourn Adonis dead.

Already has the nuptial God dismay'd,  
Quench'd his bright torch, for all his garlands fade.  
No more are joyful hymenæals sung,  
But notes of sorrow dwell on every tongue;  
While all around the general grief partake,  
For lov'd Adonis, and for Hymen's sake.

With loud laments the graces all deplore,  
And cry, "The fair Adonis is no more."

The muses, wailing the wild woods among,  
Strive to recal him with harmonious song:  
Alas! no sounds of harmony he hears,  
For cruel Proserpine has clos'd his ears.  
Cease, Venus, cease, thy soft complaints forbear,  
Reserve thy sorrows for the mournful year. FAWKES.

It will be needless, I believe, to remark to the reader, that there never was any thing more tender and mournful than this *Idyllium*; since he must doubtless have felt it in all its force, if he has a heart the least susceptible of impression.

In this piece the poet places himself in the very point of time, when the death of Adonis happened. He describes from report, and, agreeable to the notions of probability, the grief and despair of a bride, who doated with distraction on her husband. From thence he forms a train of images, at once highly ingenious and affecting. We will take a review of them one after another. There are some which are couched in a single expression: we shall confine ourselves to the most remarkable of them.

The

The first of these represents Adonis extended on the mountains : we see his blood trickling in a purple stream over a skin as white as lillies, the roses of his lips appear pale and faded.

In the second, Venus appears with dishevell'd locks, clad in a mourning robe, and running barefooted through the middle of the thorns, which at every step tears her tender flesh, and cause the blood to start forth. Her shrieks are heard in the deep vallies, as she calls on the name of her loved spouse. These two images are at once mournful and lively.

In the third, the mountains, the old oaks, the flood, the streams, and the flowers, are represented as weeping in company with Venus. All nature is at once animated by this fiction of the poet, and rendered partakers of the goddess's grief.

The fourth strongly paints the groans and sighs of Venus, who wishes to be able to recal Adonis to life, were it but to gather his departing breath herself.

In the fifth, Adonis appears laid on a bed of state, covered with flowers, and surrounded by the little loves, with their heads shaved, in token of grief, each in a different attitude.

Last of all Hymen, the graces, and destinies, all come to join their tears and lamentations to those of the afflicted Venus.

Every one of these portraitures or images are founded in the single sentiment, grief, which constitutes



constitutes the very essence of the poem. They mutually induce each other, and fall in together in a manner wholly imperceptible; seeming to offer themselves purely to sooth the imagination in its state of sorrow, and nourish that grief we should have been sorry not to have felt.

O stay, dear hapless youth! for Venus stay!

The whole of this passage is in the highest degree beautiful, all is lively and tender; every line speaks distraction and grief.

Yet still I live unhappy and forlorn,  
How hard my lot a goddess to be born!

This is a beautiful thought, or rather, indeed, sentiment; strongly expressive of the excess of love that Venus bore to her darling. She is ready even to sacrifice her divinity, to follow him to the mansions of the dead.

Take, cruel Proserpine, my lovely boy;

Let us imagine only the tone of voice in which Venus, in the height of her despair, utters this apostrophe. It is full of tenderness, mixed with sublimity.

Why didst thou urge the chace, and rashly dare, &c.

Her grief on a sudden changes to tender reproaches. "With so much beauty, was it for thee to give thyself up to the barbarous sport of attacking wild beasts?" This is very fine, and

and there is an antithesis in it so nice, as hardly to be perceptible.

As many drops of blood, &c.

Methinks this seeming calculation does not appear sufficiently noble. There is a kind of littleness in stooping to count drops of blood and tears; this supposes a mind quite clear and unembarrassed, and does not suit with the stile of a piece wholly sacred to grief.

Crown him with chaplets of the fairest flow'rs;  
But ah! the flow'rs have lost their gaudy pride,  
With him they flourish'd, and with him they dy'd.

If it should be objected that there is too much prettiness in this expression; I would reply, that grief makes us unwilling any thing should survive the loss of the beloved object. But as for the thought immediately following, viz.

With odorous myrtle, &c.

It is, doubtless, greatly forced; and, besides, is no more than the foregoing image pushed to extremity.

The loves have sheard their locks, &c.

This was a mark of grief with the antients, as appears by the example of Achilles in Homer, who cuts off his hair to strew upon the dead body of his friend Patroclus; and Orestes does the same in Sophocles, upon the tomb of his

his father Agamemnon. This description is charming, graceful, and sprightly, and we cannot join with those who think it too much so, alledging it to be rather children's play, than a ceremony befitting a funeral obsequy; for the whole of this ceremony is no more than what we have attested by Theocritus. The loves, indeed, in his account, were only in figures; nor does the poet bestow life on them in this piece, but in vertue of the licence poets have in making the several figures, they use in their descriptions, act and speak.

Cease, Venus, cease, thy soft complaints forbear;  
Reserve thy sorrows for the mournful year.

These last verses very clearly demonstrate the work to have been composed for funeral games, which were to be celebrated yearly.

We hope to stand excused for having so freely delivered our opinion on such parts of this performance, as appeared to us truly reprehensible; since our avowed intention in this work is to assist young people in the forming of their taste. What few faults are found in Bion proceed from his excess of ornament; the works of Theocritus are in general in the quite opposite extreme. Had we had occasion to point out faults in him, we should have done it with the same freedom with which we have used this author; but there was the less necessity for this, perhaps, because the age we live in is more apt  
to

to be pleased with, and adopt the errors of Bion, than those of Theocritus, especially in works of genius and wit.

By the help of this piece the reader may, if he is willing, form to himself a just idea of sentimental expression. The first thing which strikes us is a great number of interjections; now this is the first language of the sentiment when alone; next follow natural turns of expression, such as the apostrophe, exclamation, &c. and when the sentiment is connected with some thought, we find a softness and smoothness of thought, which seems to carry with it the very emphasis and affecting tone of voice with which we suppose them pronounced. Lastly, a kind of disorder and confusion in the ideas, which in this case follow on without any connection, and, as it were, run counter to one another. Nothing can be more irregular than the discourse of Venus; she lays hold of an object; straight she abandons it; then she returns to it again; one time she stops to make reflections on her grief, then she bursts out into cries and complaints; she calls on Adonis, she will speak to him, and yet has nothing new to say.

But to draw the parallel of these poets in few words, we may say, that Theocritus has described nature all simple, and even negligent; that Moschus has, by the assistance of art, put her into a more decent dress; and that Bion has decked her with several ornaments.

In



In Theocritus the scene of the Idyllium is laid in a wood, or a green field; in Moschus it is in a town; and in Bion it appears as on a theatre. When we sit down to read pastorals, we are willing to be absent from the noise and hurry of towns. Art is charming 'tis true, and nothing so much delights the mind as symmetry and proportion. Yet there are some instances in which it chuses to shake these off, and is fond of being in a kind of disorder, wherein it can perceive any thing, without any thing appearing to shew itself in particular. Then it is, that it properly tastes solitude, and enjoys it. We are desirous that the eclogue should amuse us in a soothing, nay, indolent manner, if I may so term it; and, as it were, lull us in the reading, into a kind of agreeable slumber, with just so much reflexion remaining, as to know we are in a state of repose, and to taste all the sweets of it; now this is exactly the effect which we experience from the strain and tenor of Theocritus' style. On the whole, we may venture to conclude, that these are three species of pastoral, wholly different, and that no one of them should be regarded as a rule or model for either of the other.

## VIRGIL.

Virgil was born at Mantua, of but mean parents, he first made himself known at Rome, by his pastorals. He is the only Latin poet that  
ever

ever excelled in that kind of writing; he chose Theocritus for his model, (in preference to Moschus and Bion;) to whom he has so closely attached himself, that his eclogues seem little else than imitations of that Greek poet. The subjects are the same; so are the turns, and very frequently the thoughts themselves. Horace has given the exact character of his eclogues in that famous verse;

..... Molle atque facetum  
Virgilio annuerunt gaudentes rure Camœnæ.

HOR. Sat. X. Lib. I.

But here it will be necessary to determine the exact signification of the two words, *molle* & *facetum*. It would appear, that these two words in Horace stood in need of being qualified by each other. *Molle* signifies a simple and artless sweetness, a frankness: *Facetum* a certain lightness of touch, which only tickles. The term *molle* without *facetum* would have been flat, insipid; *facetum* without *molle* would have meant at best but something smart, and, perhaps, even too much so. Horace found it necessary then to join these two words, to express thereby a smart simplicity, but so as that the simple should be the basis, and the smartness only a kind of additional salt, lightly sprinkled to quicken the taste, and render the impression stronger; so that this verse will run nearly thus. *The rural muses have endowed Virgil with an easy softness, quickened with a light vivacity.*

These

These two words convey a perfect idea of the eclogue, and are a kind of standard for our judgment of every production bearing this title : and the sole difference between the several writers in this species of poetry, consists in the greater or less degree they possess of one or other of these two qualities. Some have more of the soft, than the poignant and smart, in their manner ; others, again, more of the latter than the former. Some only one of these qualities, others neither the one or the other of them, at least in some part of their works. The true degree of perfection is in having a little of each, and in such a manner as Virgil appears to have had. We shall here present the reader with his fifth eclogue ; the subject of which, is the funeral eulogium of the shepherd Daphnis, and his Apotheosis.

The fifth ECLOGUE ; or, DAPHNIS.

English'd by Mr. DRYDEN.

MENALCAS.

SINCE on the downs our flocks together fled,  
And since my voice can match your timeful reed,  
Why sit we not beneath the grateful shade,  
Which hazles, intermix'd with elms, have made ?

MOPHUS.

---

MENALCAS.

Cur non, Mopse, boni quoniam convenimus ambo,  
Tu calamos inflare leves, ego dicere versus,  
Hic corylis mixtas inter consedimus ulmos ?

MOPHUS.

## M O P S U S.

Whether you please that sylvan scene to take,  
Where whistling winds uncertain shadows make :  
Or with you to the cooler cave succeed,  
Whose mouth the curling vines have overspread ?

MEN. Your merit and your years command the choice ;  
Amyntas only rivals you in voice.

MOP. What will not that presuming shepherd dare,  
Who thinks his voice with Phœbus' may compare ?

MEN. Begin you first ; if either Alcon's praise,  
Or dying Phyllis have inspir'd your lays :  
If her you mourn, or Codrus you commend,  
Begin, and Tityrus your flock shall tend.

MOP. Or shall I rather the sad verse repeat,  
Which on the beech's bark I lately writ :  
I writ, and sung betwixt ; now bring the swain,  
Whose voice you boast, and let him try the strain.

MEN. Such as the shrub to the tall olive shows,  
Or the pale fallow to the blushing rose ;

Such

## M O P S U S.

Tu major: tibi me est æquum parere, Menalcas,  
Sive sub incertas Zephyris motantibus umbras,  
Sive antro potius succedimus: aspice ut antrum  
Sylvestris raris sparfit labrusca racemis.

MEN. Montibus in nostris solus tibi certet Amyntas.

MOP. Quid si idem certet Phœbum superare canendo ?

MEN. Incipe, Mopse, prior, si quos aut Phyllidis ignes,  
Aut Alconis habes laudes, aut jurgia Codri.  
Incipe: pascentes servabit Tityrus hœdos.

MOP. Immo hæc, in viridi nuper quæ cortice fagi,  
Carmina descripsi, & modulans alterna notavi,  
Experiar: tu deinde iubeto certet Amyntas.

MEN. Lenta salix quantum pallenti cedit olivæ,  
Puniceis humilis quantum saliunca rosetis:

Judicio



Such is his voice, if I can judge aright,  
Compar'd to thine, in sweetness and in height.

MOR. No more, but sit and hear the promis'd lay,  
The gloomy grotto makes a doubtful day.  
The nymphs about the breathless body wait  
Of Daphnis, and lament his cruel fate.

The trees and floods were witness to their tears:  
At length the rumor reach'd his mother's ears.

The wretched parent, with a pious haste,  
Came running, and his lifeless limbs embrac'd.  
She sigh'd, she sobb'd, and furious with despair,  
She rent her garments, and she tore her hair:  
Accusing all the gods, and ev'ry star.

The swains forgot their sheep, nor near the brink  
Of running waters brought their herds to drink.

The thirsty cattle, of themselves, abstained  
From water, and their grassy fare disdain'd.

The death of Daphnis woods and hills deplore,  
They cast the sound to Libya's distant shore;  
The Libyan lions hear, and hearing roar.

Fierce

*Judicio nostro tantum tibi cedit Amyntas.*

MOR. Sed tu desine plura, puer: successimus antro.

*Extinctum Nymphæ crudeli funere Daphnim*

*Flebant: (a) vos coryli testes & flumina Nymphis:*

*Cum, complexa sui corpus miserabile nati,*

*Atque Deos atque astra vocat crudelia mater.*

*Non ulli pastos illis egere diebus*

*Frigida, Daphni, boves ad flumina: ulla neque amnem*

*Libavit quadrupes, nec graminis attigit herbam.*

*Daphni, tuum Pænos etiam ingemuisse leones*

*Interitum, montesque feri sylvæque loquuntur.*

Daphnis

(a) *Extinctum Nymphæ.* other verse is a beauty of harmony; from its being of two syllables, and a spondee. A dactyle would not have the same effect. This verse is harmonious, soothingly sad, and plain. Boileau advises lowering the stile in grief. *Flebant* being left to begin the effect.

Fierce tygers Daphnis taught the yoke to bear,  
 And first with curling ivy dress'd the spear :  
 Daphnis did rites to Bacchus first ordain ;  
 And holy rivals for his reeling train :  
 As vines the trees, as grapes the vines adorn,  
 As bulls the herds, and fields the yellow corn ;  
 So bright a splendor, so divine a grace,  
 The glorious Daphnis cast on his illustrious race,  
 When envious fate the godlike Daphnis took,  
 Our guardian gods the fields and plains forfook :  
 Pales no longer swell'd the seeming grain,  
 Nor Phœbus fed his oxen on the plain :  
 No fruitful crop the sickly fields return ;  
 But oats and darnel choke the rising corn.  
 And where the vales with violets once were crown'd,  
 Now knotty burrs and thorns disgrace the ground.  
 Come, shepherds, come, and strow with leaves the  
 plain ;  
 Such fun'ral rites your Daphnis did ordain :  
 With cypress boughs the chrystal fountains hide,  
 And softly let the running water glide ;

A lasting

---

Daphnis & Armenias curru subungere tigris  
 Instituit: Daphnis thiasos inducere Baccho,  
 Et foliis lentas intexere mollibus hastas.  
 Vitis ut arboribus decori est, ut vitibus uvæ,  
 Ut gregibus tauri; segetes ut pinguibus arvis;  
 Tu decus omne tuis. Postquam te fata tulerunt,  
 Ipsa Pales agros, atque ipse reliquit Apollo.  
 Grandia sæpe quibus mandavimus hordea sulcis,  
 Infelix lolium, & steriles dominantur avenæ.  
 Pro molli violâ, pro purpureo narcisso,  
 Carduus & spinis surgit paliurus acutis.  
 Spargite humum foliis, inducite fontibus umbras,  
 Pastores: mandat fieri sibi talia Daphnis.

Et

A lasting monument to Daphnis raise;  
With this inscription to record his praise:

Daphnis, the fields delight, the shepherds love,  
Renown'd on earth, and deify'd above,  
Whose flock excell'd the fairest on the plains,  
But less than he himself surpass'd the swains.

MEN. O heav'nly poet! such thy verse appears,  
So sweet, so charming, to my ravish'd ears,  
As to the weary swain, with care oppress'd,  
Beneath the sylvan shade, refreshing rest:  
As to the sev'rish traveller, when first  
He finds a chrystal stream to quench his thirst:  
In singing, as in piping, you excel;  
And scarce your master could perform so well.  
O fortunate young man, at least your lays  
Are next to his, and claim the second praise.  
Such as they are, my rural songs I join,  
To raise our Daphnis to the pow'rs divine;  
For Daphnis was so good, to love whate'er was  
mine.

M O P.

Et tumulum facite, & tumulo superaddite carmen:  
Daphnis ego in sylvis hinc usque ad sidera notus:  
Formosi pecoris custos formosior ipse.

MEN. Tale tuum carmen nobis, divine Poëta,  
Quale sopor fessis in gramine, quale per æstum,  
Dulcis aquæ saliente sitim restinguere rivo.  
Nec calamis solum æquiparas, sed voce magistrum.  
Fortunate puer, tu nunc eris alter ab illo:  
Nos tamen hæc quocumque modo tibi nostra vicissim  
Dicemus, Daphninque tuum tollemus ad astra:  
Daphnin ad astra feremus: amavit nos quoque Daphnis.

M O P.

MOP. How is my soul with such a promise rais'd!  
 For both the boy was worthy to be prais'd,  
 And Stimichon has often made me long  
 To hear, like him, so soft, so sweet a song.

MEN. Daphnis, the guest of heaven, with won-  
 d'ring eyes,

Views in the milky way the starry skies:

And far beneath him, from the shining sphere,

Beholds the moving clouds, and rolling year.

For this, with chearful cries, the woods resound,

The purple spring arrays the various ground,

The nymphs and shepherds dance; and Pan him-  
 self is crown'd.

The wolf no longer prowls for mighty spoils,

Nor birds the springs fear, nor stags the toils:

For Daphnis reigns above; and deals from thence

His mother's milder beams, and peaceful influence.

The mountain tops unshorn, the rocks rejoice;

The lowly shrubs partake of human voice.

Assenting nature, with a gracious nod,

Proclaims him, and salutes the new admitted God.

Q Be

MOP. An quicquam nobis tali sit munere majus?

Et puer ipse fuit cantari dignus, & ista

Jampridem Stimicon laudavit carmina nobis.

MEN. Candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi,

Sub pedibusque videt nubes & sidera Daphnis.

Ergo alacris sylvas, & cætera rura voluptas,

Panaque, pastoresque tenet, Dryadasque puellas.

Nec lupus insidias pecori, nec retia servis.

Ulla dolum meditantur: amat bonus otia Daphnis.

Ipsi lætitia voces ad sidera jactant.

Intonsi montes: ipsæ jam carmina rupes,

Ipsa sonant arbusa: Deus, Deus ille, Menalca.

Sic



Be still propitious, ever good to thine :  
 Behold four hallow'd altars we design ;  
 And two to thee, and two to Phæbus rise ;  
 On both are offer'd annual sacrifice.  
 The holy priests, at each returning year,  
 Two bowls of milk, and two of oil shall bear ;  
 And I myself the guests with friendly bowls will  
 chear.

Two goblets will I crown with sparkling wine,  
 The gen'rous vintage of the *Cbian* vine ;  
 These will I pour to thee, and make the nectar  
 thine.

In winter shall the genial feast be made  
 Before the fire ; by summer in the shade.

*Dametas* shall perform the rites divine,  
 And *Litæian Ægon* in the song shall join.

*Alpheibæus*, tripping, shall advance ;  
 And mimic satyrs in his antic dance.

When to the nymphs our annual rites we pay,  
 And when our fields with victims we survey ;  
 While savage boars delight in shady woods,  
 And finny fish inhabit in the floods ;

While

---

Sis bonus ô felixque tuis ! en quatuor aras :  
 Ecce duas tibi, Daphni, duoque altaria Phœbo.  
 Pocula bina nova spumantia lacte quotannis,  
 Craterasque duos statuam tibi pinguis olivæ :  
 Et multo inprimis hilarans convivia Baccho,  
 Ante focum, si frigus erit, si messis, in umbra,  
 Vina novum fundam calathis Arvisia nectar.  
 Cantabunt mihi *Dametas*, & *Lyctius Ægon* :  
 Saltantes Satyros imitabitur *Alpheibæus*.  
 Hæc tibi semper erunt, & cum solennia vota  
 Reddemus Nymphis, & cum lustrabimus agros.  
 Dum juga montis aper, fluvios dum piscis amabit :

Damque

While bees on thyme, and locusts feed on dew,  
 Thy grateful swains these honours shall renew.  
 Such honours as we pay to pow'rs divine,  
 To Bacchus, and to Ceres, shall be thine.  
 Such annual honours shall be giv'n, and thou  
 Shalt hear, and shalt condemn thy suppliants to their  
 vow.

MOR. What present worth thy verse can Mopsus  
 find?

Not the soft breezes of the southern wind,  
 That play thro' trembling trees, delight me more;  
 Nor murmur'ing billows on the sounding shore;  
 Nor winding streams that thro' the valley glide;  
 And the scarce cover'd pebbles gently chide.

MEN. Receive you first this tuneful pipe; the same  
 That play'd my Corydon's unhappy flame.  
 The same that sung Neæra's conqu'ring eyes;  
 And, had the judge been just, had won the prize.

Q 2

MOR.

Dumque thymo pascuntur apes, dum rore cicadæ:  
 Semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt.  
 Ut Baccho Cererique, tibi sic vota quotannis  
 Agricolæ facient: damnabis tu quoque votis. (a)

MOR. Quæ tibi, quæ tali reddam pro carmine dona?  
 Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus Austri,  
 Nec percussa juvant fluctu tam littora, nec quæ  
 Saxosæ inter decurrunt flumina valles.

MEN. Hac te nos fragili donabimus ante cicutâ.  
 Hæc nos, Formosum Corydon ardebat Alexim:  
 Hæc eadem docuit, Cujum pecus? An Melibæi?

MOR.

(a) *Damnabis tu quoque votis.* Thou shalt condemn thy  
 suppliants to their vow. This  
 is a turn peculiar to the Latin  
 idiom, to say, "You will

"grant favors, and those who  
 "shall have made any vow to  
 "obtain them from you, will  
 "be bound to perform it."

MOR. Accept from me this sheephook in exchange,  
 The handle brass; the knobs in equal range.  
 Antigènes, with kisses, often try'd  
 To beg this present, in his beauty's pride;  
 When youth and love are hard to be deny'd.  
 But what I could refuse to his request,  
 Is your's unask'd, for you deserve it best.

This piece is entirely in the dramatic taste. It begins by a dialogue between two shepherds, who each in his turn speaks his part. The stile is throughout truly pastoral. Nevertheless, there are three kinds of degrees or variation in the expression; in the familiar chat between the two actors, who talk in the stile of simple shepherds, the strain is of the comic-pastoral kind. The two other degrees are found in the different narrations, wherein the actors shew themselves not only as shepherds, but as shepherds that are poets likewise, and consequently inspired, and speak therefore in a more elevated strain. The first of these narrations has the elegiac tone, and the second has somewhat of the lyric.

*Daphnis . . . curru subjungere, &c.*] This is the elogium of the shepherd Daphnis; and is quite simple, unpompous, and free from a load of phrases. Daphnis had taught the other shepherds three things, these are named, and the whole

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MOR. At tu sume pedum, quod me, cum sepe rogaret  
 Non tulit Antigènes (& erat tum dignus amari);  
 Formosum paribus nodis atque are, Menalce,

whole is finished : the rest of the elegy is wholly dedicated to the deploring and regretting his loss. The two shepherds address themselves to him, as if he could hear them, telling him, that all nature changed since he died. Such is the nature of man, that if it was possible he could hear his own funeral oration pronounced, nothing would so agreeably affect him, as to find that every thing died with him, as if the whole order of nature depended on his fate.

[*Daphnis ego in sylvis, &c.*] This verse, so esteemed for its beauty, is extremely difficult to translate. Some translations have got over the difficulty by throwing it into verse. While others, in confining the thought, has most wretchedly perverted the meaning. And it often happens, that in endeavouring to render it in a smooth manner, the energy of it is lost or enfeebled.

We shall confine ourselves to this single eclogue of Virgil, as we imagine that it will be sufficient to give a just idea of all the rest. In this little piece the stile is natural, and yet lively ; plain, yet rested ; the images are chosen, the sentiments soft and tender, the versification easy, flowing, and gently harmonious, like the soft murmuring of a brook. The expressions are in general simple, some few of them are rich, all are just and true. There are, however, some places in which seem to want little more regularity and perspicuity, and even delicacy and heightening. But allowing that this poet does not keep an



entire pace with Theocritus himself, at least we are obliged to own, that he has followed him very closely.

Calpurnius & Nemesianus were two authors who distinguished themselves by their pastoral poetry, under the reign of the emperor Dioclesian. The one was a Sicilian, the other was born at Carthage: after reading Virgil, their works will appear to have little of that softness which is the soul of the eclogue; their images are indeed sometimes very agreeable, and their verse has a happy turn, but they have nothing of that pastoral spirit which inspired the muse of Theocritus.

#### C H A P. IV.

The characters of the best pastoral writers among the moderns.

**H**AVING given the history of the eclogue, so far as relates to its character, differences, and designs, among the antients; we now come to consider the characters of the more modern writers of this class, who are indeed little better than servile imitators of the manners and customs of the former.

The Italians however stand excepted, the eclogue appearing in their writings under a character so entirely new, that it is hardly to be known again for the same; with them it sparkles with witty conceits, a play of words, and thoughts in the stile of trap-wit, for ever running into antitheses. This is the judgment

ment passed by Mr. Fontenelle, on the works of Guarini, Bonarelli, and Cavallo Marino. According to him the *Aminta* of Tasso is the best piece of pastoral writing in the modern Italian; because the author is not so much given to that florid way of writing as the rest of his countrymen. Notwithstanding this, whether it is an advantage peculiar to the Italian tongue, or whether it be the character of the writers themselves, there is that true softness, that sweetness in their eclogues, which alone belongs to pastoral. What pity it is then, that this native beauty should be hid under a load of useless ornaments.

## FRENCH PASTORAL WRITERS.

## RONSARD.

We shall not here take any notice of Ronsard's eclogues; pretending to reduce all to rule, he turned all into disorder, not only in this kind, but even in the whole French language. His shepherds talk in the stile of villagers; every one knows Boileau's lines on this subject.

On diroit que Ronsard sur ses pipeaux rustiques  
Vient encore frédonner ses Idylles gothiques,  
Et changer, sans respect de l'oreille & du son,  
Licidas en Pierrot, & Philis en Toinon.

Art. Poet. Chant. 2.

You'd swear that Ronsard in his rustic strains,  
Was piping to the milkmaids, and the swains;

Changing without respect to sound or dress,  
Strephon and Phillis into Tom and Bess.

Henry II. he calls Henriot (Harry) Charles IX.  
Carlin (Charley) Catherine of Medicis Catin  
(Kate) and indeed this is the only thing that  
looks like pastoral in his eclogues.

#### RACAN.

*Honorat de Buëil, Marquis de Racan*, died in  
1670, and was pupil to Malherbe; he first raised  
the character of the French pastoral. He had a  
fruitful and easy genius, and was of a sweet and  
even disposition, consequently possessed all the  
requisites for a pastoral writer. And, indeed, the  
spirit of Theocritus and Virgil seems to breathe  
anew in his pastorals, some passages of which  
may with justice be compared to the most beauti-  
ful and delicate ones in either of those authors.  
The shepherd's song, in praise of Mary of Me-  
dicis, queen mother to Louis the thirteenth, is  
the only piece of his to which we shall here give  
a place.

#### *Chanson de Bergers.*

Paissez, cheres brebis, jouissez de la joie

Que le Ciel nous envoie :

A la fin sa clémence a pitié de nos pleurs ;

Allez dans la campagne, allez dans la prairie,

N'épargnez point les fleurs,

Il en revient assez sous les pas de Marie.

Par elle renaitra la saison désirée

De Saturne & de Rhée,

Où le bonheur rendoit tous nos desirs contens,  
 Et par elle on verra reluire en ce rivage  
 Un éternel Printems,  
 Tel que nous le voyons paroître en son visage.  
 Nous ne reverrons plus nos campagnes désertes,  
 Au lieu d'épics, couvertes  
 De tant de bataillons l'un à l'autre opposés.  
 L'innocence & la paix regneront sur la terre,  
 Et les Dieux apaisés  
 Oublieront pour jamais l'usage du tonnerre.  
 La Nimphe de la Seine incessamment révere  
 Cette grande Bergère  
 Qui chasse de ses bords tout sujet de souci,  
 Et pour jouir long-tems de l'heureuse fortune  
 Que l'on possède ici,  
 Porte plus lentement son tribut à Neptune.  
 Païssez donc, mes brebis, prenez part aux délices  
 Dont les destins propices  
 Par un si beau remède ont guéri nos douleurs ;  
 Allez dans la campagne, allez dans la prairie  
 N'épargnez point les fleurs,  
 Il en revient assez sous les pas de Marie.

The whole of this piece is of an admirable  
 sweetness, and entirely in the lyric taste, conse-  
 quently very easily adapted to song. The ideas  
 are very noble, but at the same time employed  
 so naturally, that the shepherds who sing seem  
 to have met with them in the very subject, ra-  
 ther than to have sought for them in their own  
 imaginations. The verse,

Tel que nous le voyons paroître en son visage,  
 Appears at first foreign, and out of place, but if



one consults taste, there will be found a particular grace in it. It is one of those finesses made use of by art, when it would appear more like nature. It is a kind of after-thought, and therefore carelessly thrown upon the rest, rather than it should be lost. Shepherds are not so confined or precise in the arrangement of their ideas: this appeared to them applicable enough while they were upon the subject of the spring, and they accordingly left it in the place it first occurred. La Fontaine has a great number of these detached thoughts.

The reader will doubtless have tasted the beauty of that expression, *oublier l'usage du tonnerre*; and of that wherein the river Seine, personalized, seems to leave with regret the walls of Paris. Racan himself was so very fond of this last thought (and indeed it is extremely graceful and pleasing) that he has made use of it in two other places of his works.

La Nimphe de la Marne & le Dieu de la Seine,  
 Qui pour leur mariage ont choisi cette plaine,  
 Nous témoignent assez par leurs tours & retours  
 Le déplaisir qu'ils ont d'en éloigner leur cours.

Thus Englished;

The nymph of the Marne, and the god of the Seine,  
 Who for their soft union made choice of this plain;  
 By their windings and turnings sufficiently prove,  
 How unwilling they are from the spot to remove.

Almost

Almost every one knows in what manner the celebrated Santeuil has rendered this thought in Latin, in his famous inscription on a fountain, in the gardens of Versailles.

*Sequana cùm primùm reginæ allabitur urbi,  
Tardat præcipites ambitiosus aquas.  
Captus amore loci cursum obliviscitur, anceps  
Quo fluat, & dulces nescit in urbe moras.*

The rest of the inscription is only a supplement to the first thought, and runs thus ;

*Hinc varios implens fluctu subeunte canales,  
Fons fieri gaudet, qui modo flumen erat.*

We shall take no notice of the pastoral pieces of Racan, as they were composed for the theatre, and consequently any passages taken from the rest would lose great part of their beauties, as they depend chiefly on the different circumstances of representation.

#### SEGRAIS.

M. de Segrais is, according to Fontenelle, the most complete model we have for pastoral poetry, and in this he agrees with Despreaux ; who says,

*Que Segrais dans l'Eglogue enchante les forêts :*

*There gentle Segrais charms the list'ning woods.*

Here follow some passages from his first eclogue.

Tircis étoit touché des attraits de Climène,  
 Sans que d'aucun espoir il pût flatter sa peine :  
 Ce Berger accablé de son mortel ennui,  
 Ne se plaisoit qu'aux lieux aussi tristes que lui.  
 Errant à la merci de ses inquiétudes,  
 Sa douleur l'entraînoit aux noires solitudes ;  
 Et des tendres accens de sa mourante voix,  
 Il faisoit retentir les rochers & les bois.

One may readily perceive this to be an imitation of Virgil's second eclogue ; (a) and may even venture to affirm, that the most beautiful strokes in it are borrowed from that author.

O les charmans discours ! ô les divines choses,  
 Qu'un jour disoit Amire en la saison des roses !  
 Doux zéphirs, qui regniez alors en ces beaux lieux,  
 N'en portates-vous rien aux oreilles des Dieux ?

It is impossible to translate the Latin poet more pastorally than is here done.

#### MADAME DESHOULIERES.

This lady yields to no one in pastoral writing. Her Idylliums have at once that fund of sweetness, and that vivacity mentioned by Horace, both which qualities they possess in the most exquisite

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(a) *Fermosum Corydon pastor ardebat Alexin . . . .*

*Tantum inter densas, umbrosa cacumino, fagas*

*Affiduè veniebat, ibi hæc incondita solus*

*Montibus & Sylvis studio jactabat inani.*

Virg. Eclog. 2.

quisite degree. To an admirable delicacy she joins the secret of concealing that nicety of sentiment, which prevails through all her thoughts and images. She is inspired by the situation in which she places herself at the time of writing. She has the simplicity of Theocritus, the delicacy of Virgil, and the spirit of Bion; and has so happily blended these several qualities, that she might perhaps have bid fair for the pre-eminence, had she shewn a little more variety in her subject. But they all seem to arise from a kind of habitual melancholly, which gives them a false air of elegy. Such for example is the following piece of hers.

## I R I S.

Errez, mes chers moutons, errez à l'avanture :  
 J'ai perdu mon Berger, ma houlette, mon chien.  
 S'il plait aux Dieux je n'aimerai plus rien  
 Qui soit sujet aux loix de la nature.

Mon cœur toujours brisé par de cruels ennuis,  
 Ne cherche plus que la retraite.

Païssez, mes chers moutons, sans chien & sans houlette ;

Je ne puis vous garder dans l'état où je suis.

Partez, laissez-moi seule, innocens animaux,  
 Mêler encore mes pleurs à l'onde fugitive ;

Non, n'attendez plus rien de ma raison captive ;  
 Elle succombe enfin sous le poids de mes maux.

Ne vous reposez plus sur l'amitié sincère

Qu'ont toujours eu pour moi les Bergers d'alentour ;

Je



Je n'éprouve que trop qu'ils ont perdu le jour,  
Qu'il en est peu d'un pareil caractère.

J'entens vos bélemens, ils ne sont que trop doux !  
Que je vous plains, que je vous aime !

Mais quand je ne puis rien dans mes maux pour  
moi-même,

Helas ! que pourrai-je pour vous !

Puissiez-vous, chers moutons, dans de gras pâturages  
Vivre dans une heureuse oisiveté,

Vous garantir des maux, des loups & des orages !

Ainsi l'aimable Iris sur les bords d'un ruisseau  
Livrée à sa douleur mortelle,

Eloignoit à regret pour jamais d'auprès d'elle  
Son triste & fidèle troupeau.

Madame Deshoulières has composed several other Idylliums on sheep, birds, brooks, &c. pieces which have done great honor to the delicacy of her taste. The object she proposes to herself in these, is to shew that the condition of the brute creation, and even of inanimate things, is worthy the envy of men ; whose reason, though impotent, is always overbearing ; ever in opposition, yet incapable of surmounting any difficulty, and so weak and precarious, that a little wine oversets it, and an infant may mislead it. On this head she thus addresses her sheep.

Ne vaudroit-il pas mieux vivre comme vous faites  
Dans une douce oisiveté ?

Ne vaudroit-il pas mieux être comme vous êtes

Dans

Dans une heureuse obscurité,  
 Que d'avoir sans tranquillité  
 Des richesses, de la naissance,  
 De l'esprit, de la beauté ?  
 Ces prétendus trésors dont on fait vanité,  
 Valent moins que votre indolence . . .  
 Paissez, moutons, paissez sans règle & sans science,  
 Malgré la trompeuse apparence  
 Vous êtes plus heureux & plus sages que nous.

Nothing can be more delicate, soft, or better turned, than this passage ! unhappily, indeed, the doctrine it includes tends to enervate the manners, and incline them to a degree of epicurism, not only repugnant to the Christian system of morality, but destructive of that fortitude of soul, and manly vigor, which is at once the foundation and support of true worth.

To the foregoing piece we shall add *Le Ruisseau*, or the *Idyllium* of the brook, not only because it is freer from the effeminate spirit of the former, but because it contains a satyr upon several vices, and consequently is a lesson of virtue and morality.

#### LE RUISSEAU.

Ruisseau, nous paroissions avoir un même sort,  
 D'un cours précipité nous allons l'un & l'autre,  
 Vous à la mer, nous à la mort.

How delightful is the cadence of this verse !

Mais, hélas ! que d'ailleurs je vois peu de rapport  
 Entre votre course & la nôtre.

Vous

Vous vous abandonnez fans remords, fans terreur  
 A votre pente naturelle;  
 Point de loi parmi vous ne la rend criminelle.

This thought is in fact false, for it was not  
 the law that made crimes, but our crimes that  
 occasioned the law.

La vieillesse chez vous n'a rien qui fasse horreur,  
 Près de la fin de votre course

Vous êtes plus fort & plus beau

Que vous n'êtes à votre source.

Vous retrouvez toujours quelqu'agrément nouveau.

Si de ces paisibles bocages

La fraîcheur de vos eaux augmente les appas,

Votre bienfait ne se perd pas :

Par de délicieux ombrages

Ils embellissent vos rivages.

Sur un sable brillant entre des prés fleuris

Coule votre onde toujours pure,

Mille & mille poissons dans votre sein nourris,

Ne vous attirent point de chagrins, de mépris :

Avec tant de bonheur d'où vient votre murmure ?

Helas ! votre sort est si doux,

Taisez-vous, ruisseau, c'est à nous

A nous plaindre de la nature.

How beautiful is this passage ! what a softness  
 in its harmony ! what a happy transition to in-  
 troduce the following !

De tant de passions que nourrit notre cœur,

Apprenez qu'il n'en est pas une

Que ne traîne auprès de soi le trouble & la douleur,

Le repentir ou l'infortune.

Having

Having shewn the evils which are the consequences of our passions, she returns to the brook ; whose constancy and fidelity she proceeds to describe.

Ruisseau, que vous êtes heureux !  
Il n'est point parmi vous de ruisseaux infidèles.  
Lorsque les ordres absolus  
De l'Etre indépendant qui gouverne le monde,  
Font qu'un autre ruisseau se mêle avec votre onde ;  
Quand vous êtes unis, vous ne vous quittez plus.  
De toutes sortes d'unions  
Que notre vie est éloignée !  
De trahisons, d'horreurs & de dissensions  
Elle est toujours accompagnée ;  
Qu'avez-vous mérité, ruisseau tranquille & doux,  
Pour être mieux traité que nous ?  
Qu'on ne me vante point ces biens imaginaires,  
Ces prérogatives, ces droits,  
Qu'invente notre orgueil pour masquer nos misères.

How noble this thought ! how elegantly expressed !

C'est lui seul qui nous dit que par un juste choix  
Le Ciel mit, en formant les hommes,  
Les autres Etres sous leurs loix.  
A ne nous point flatter, nous sommes  
Leurs Tirans plutôt que leurs Rois.  
Pourquoi vous mettre à la torture ?  
Pourquoi vous renfermer dans cent canaux divers ?  
Et pourquoi renverser l'ordre de la nature  
En vous forçant à jaillir dans les airs ?  
Si tout doit obéir à nos ordres suprêmes,



Si tout est fait pour nous, s'il ne faut que vouloir,  
Que n'employons-nous mieux ce souverain pouvoir,  
Que ne regnons-nous sur nous-mêmes ? . . .

Helas ! on n'a plus rien à craindre,

Les vices n'ont plus de censeurs,

Le monde n'est rempli que de lâches flatteurs ;

Savoir vivre, c'est savoir feindre.

Ruisseau, ce n'est plus que chez vous

Qu'on trouve encor de la franchise ;

On y voit la laideur ou la beauté qu'en nous

La bizarre nature a mise ;

Aucun défaut ne s'y déguise :

Aux Rois comme aux Bergers, vous les reprochez  
tous.

Aussi ne consulte-t'on guère

De vos tranquilles eaux le fidèle cristal ;

On évite de même un ami trop sincère,

Ce déplorable gout est le gout général.

Les leçons font rougir ; personne ne les souffre :

Le fourbe veut paroître homme de probité.

Enfin, dans cet horrible gouffre

De misère & de vanité,

Je me perds ; & plus j'envisage

La foiblesse de l'homme & sa malignité,

Et moins de la Divinité

En lui je reconnois l'image.

Madame Deshoulières ends with the same thought with which she began, by telling the brook to hasten to the sea, as we do to our grave.

## ENGLISH PASTORAL WRITERS.

## EDMUND SPENCER.

This poet was born at London, in the year 1510, and educated at Pembroke Hall in Cambridge; he died in the year 1596, poet laureat to Q. Elizabeth.

His calendar is allowed to be the most compleat work of the kind, which any nation has produced, since the time of Virgil; not but that he may be thought imperfect in some points. His eclogues are somewhat too long, he is too allegorical, and treats of religious matters in a pastoral stile, as the Mantuan had done before him. He has employed the lyric measure, which is contrary to the practice of the old poets. His stanza is not every where the same, nor always chosen; by which means his expression sometimes is not concise enough; for the tetrastric or stanza of 4 lines, has obliged him to extend his sense to a fixed length, which would have been more closely confined in the couplet.

In his manners, thoughts, and characters, he comes near to Theocritus himself, though, notwithstanding the care he has taken, he is certainly inferior in his dialect. For the doric had its beauty and propriety in the time of Theocritus; whereas the old English, and country phrases of Spencer, were either entirely obsolete, or spoken only by the lower class of people. Pastoral should  
be

be simple and plain, but not rustic and clownish. The addition of a calendar to his eclogues is very beautiful, since by this, besides the general moral of innocence and simplicity, which is common to other pastoral writings, he has one peculiar to himself; he compares human life to the several seasons, and at once exposes to his reader a view of the great and little worlds in their various changes and aspects. Yet the scrupulous division of his pastorals into months has obliged him either to repeat the same descriptions in other words for three months together, or when it was exhausted before entirely to omit it. The reason is evident, because the year has not that variety in it to furnish every month with a particular description, as it may every season.

Thus far Mr. Dryden in his character of this author: we shall now present the reader with a specimen from his own works, as the best comment we can make on his genius and style.

#### COLIN CLOUT.

A shepherd's boy (no better do him call)  
When winter's wasteful spright was almost spent,  
All in a sunshine-day, as did befall,  
Led forth his flock, that had been long ypent.

So faint they wox, and feeble in the fold,  
That now uneathes their feet could them uphold.

All as the sheep, such was the shepherd's look,  
For pale and wan he was, (alas the while!)  
May seem he lov'd, or else some care he took:  
Well couth he tune his pipe, and frame his stile.

Tho'

Tho' to a hill his fainting flock he led,  
And thus he 'plain'd, the while his sheep there fed;

Ye gods of love, that pity lovers pain,  
(If any gods the pain of lovers pity)  
Look from above, where you in joys remain,  
And bow your ears unto my doleful ditty.

And Pan thou shepherd's god, that once did love,  
Pity the pains, that thou thyself didst prove.

Thou barren ground, whom winter's wrath hath wasted,  
Art made a mirror, to behold my plight;  
Whylom thy fresh spring flower'd, and after hasted  
Thy summer proud, with daffadillies dight:  
And now is come thy winter's stormy state,  
Thy mantle marr'd, wherein thou maskedit late.

Such rage as winters, reigneth in my heart,  
My life-blood freezing, with unkindly cold;  
Such stormy fours do breed my baleful smart,  
As if my years were waste, and woxen old.

And yet, alas, but now my spring begun,  
And yet, alas, it is already done.

You naked trees, whose shady leaves are lost,  
Wherein the birds were wont to build their bower,  
And now are cloth'd with moss and hoary frost,  
Instead of blossms, wherewith your buds did flower;  
I see your tears, that from your boughs do rain,  
Whose drops in drery isicles remain.

Also my lustful lease is dry and fear,  
My timely buds with wailing all are wasted;  
The blossom, which my branch of youth did bear,  
With breathed sighs is blown away, and blasted:  
And from mine eyes the drizzling tears descend,  
As on your boughs the isicles depend.

Thou



Thou feeble flock, whose fleece is rough and rent,  
 Whose knees are weak, through fast and evil fare,  
 Maist witness well, by thy ill government,  
 Thy master's mind is overcome with care.

Thou weak, I wan: thou lean, I quite forlorn:

With mourning pine I, you with pining mourn.  
 A thousand sighs I curse that careful hour,  
 Wherein I long'd the neighbour town to see:  
 And eke ten thousand fithes I bless the flour,  
 Wherein I saw so fair a fight as she.

Yet all for naught: such fight hath bred my bane:

Ah God, that love should breed both joy and pain!  
 It is not Hobbinol, wherefore I plain,  
 Albe my love he seek with daily suit:  
 His clownish gifts and courtesies I disdain,  
 His kids, his cracknels, and his early fruit.

Ah, foolish Hobbinol, thy gifts been vain:

Colin them gives to Rosalind again.

I love thilk las, (alas, why do I love?)  
 And am forlorn, (alas, why am I lorn?)  
 She deigns not my good will, but doth reprove,  
 And of my rural musick holdeth scorn.

Shepherds device she hateth as the snake,

And laughs the songs that Colin Clout doth make.

Wherefore my pipe, albe rude Pan you please,  
 Yet for thou pleasest not where most I would,  
 And thou unlucky muse, that wouldest to ease  
 My musing mind, yet canst not, when thou should;

Both pipe and muse shall sore the while abide,

So broke his oaten pipe, and down did lie.

By that the welked Phœbus 'gan avail

His weary wain, and now the frosty night

Her mantle black through heaven 'gan over hale,

Which seen, the pensive boy half in despight.

Arose,

Arose, and homeward drove his sullen sheep,  
Whose hanging heads did seem his careful case to  
weep.

## AMBROSE PHILIPS.

Various are the opinions of the learned concerning the merit of this author as a pastoral writer; Sir Richard Steele was a professed admirer of him in this light; and gives us the following character of him (*a*).

This poet, like his predecessor Spencer, both copied and improved the beauties of the antients, whose manner of thinking is above all things to be recommended. As far as our language would allow him, he has formed a pastoral stile, according to the Doric of Theocritus; in which I dare not say he has excelled Virgil, but I may be allowed, for the honor of our language, to suppose it more capable of that pretty rusticity than the former.

While Sir Richard Steele thus admired and practised our author, and endeavoured by all possible means to procure him the palm in this kind of writing; Mr. Pope, who seems to have a confirmed aversion to him (and whose judgment is therefore liable to be surpassed) fell on the most artful and insinuating method to defeat his purposes, and prevent the diminution of his own reputation, of which he was not a little jealous.

The

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(*a*) See Guardian, Vol. I, No. 30.

The reader cannot be ignorant, that there are several numbers in the Guardian (a) employed upon pastoral poetry, and one in particular, upon the merits of Philips and Pope, in which the latter is found a better versifier; but as a true arcadian, the preference is given to Philips: see Guardian, Number XL.

This paper was written by Mr. Pope himself. Nothing could have so effectually defeated the design of diminishing his reputation as this method, which had a contrary effect: he laid down false principles, upon these he reasoned, and by comparing his own, and Philips's pastorals, upon such principles as was no great compliment to the latter, that he wrote more agreeable to notions, which are in themselves false.

The two following lines, so much celebrated in this paper, are sufficiently convincing that the whole criticism is ironical.

Ah silly! I more silly than my sheep,

Which on the flowery plains I once did keep.

Nothing can be much more silly than these lines, and yet the author says, "How he still charms the ear with the artful repetition of epithets." *Silly, I more silly than my sheep.*

Notwithstanding the disadvantageous light Mr. Philips's pastorals appear in, when compared with those of Mr. Pope, yet we may with justice assert,

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(a) See Guardian, Vol. I. No. 22, 23, 28, 30.

fert Mr. Phillips to be no mean arcadian; by endeavouring to imitate too servilely the manners and sentiments of vulgar rustics; he has sometimes raised a laugh against himself, yet there are in some of his pastorals a natural simplicity, a true doric dialect, and well delineated descriptions; the following one, on our pastoral sports, is extremely beautiful, and may serve as a specimen of what this writer's genius is capable of.

Whilome did I, all as this poplar fair,  
Upraise my heedless head, devoid of care;  
'Mongst rustic routs, the chief for wanton game,  
Nor could they merry make till Lobbon came.  
Who better seen than I in shepherds arts,  
To please the lads, and win the lasses hearts?  
How softly to mine oaten reed so sweet,  
Went they upon the green to shift their feet.  
And when the dance was done, how would they yearn,  
Some well devised tale from me to learn?  
For many songs and tales of mirth had I,  
To chase the ling'ring sun adown the sky;  
But ah! since Lucy coy hath wrought her spite,  
Within my heart, unmindful of delight;  
The jolly grooms I fly, and all alone,  
To rocks and woods pour forth my fruitless moan:

## PASTORAL I.

O now! if ever, bring  
The laurel green, the smelling eglantine,  
And tender branches from the mantling vine.  
The dewy cowslip, that on meadows grows,  
The fountain violet, and garden rose;

R

Your



Your hamlet strew, and ev'ry public way,  
 And consecrate to mirth, Albino's day.  
 Myself will lavish all my little store,  
 And deal about the goblet flowing o'er;  
 Old Moulin there shall harp, young Mico sing,  
 And Cuddy dance the round amidst the ring;  
 And Hobbinol his antic gambols play;

## PASTORAL II.

Mr. P O P E.

This great man is allowed to have been one of the first rank among the poets of our nation; his pastoral pieces are four, viz.

Spring, addressed to Sir William Trumbull,  
 Summer, to Dr. Garth,  
 Autumn, to Mr. Wycherley,  
 Winter, in memory of Mrs. Tempest.

We shall present the reader with a specimen from his second pastoral, called summer; his own works being a better comment on his genius and stile in this kind of poetry, than could be found in whole folio's of criticisms.

S U M M E R, or Alexis.

A shepherd's boy (he seeks no better name)  
 Led forth his flocks along the silver thame;  
 Where dancing sun-beams on the waters play'd,  
 And verdant alders form'd a quiv'ring shade:  
 Soft as he mourn'd, the streams forgot to flow,  
 The flocks around a dumb compassion show;  
 The Naiads wept in ev'ry wat'ry bow'r,  
 And Jove consented in a silent show'r:

Ye shady beeches, and ye cooling streams,  
 Defence from Phœbus', not from Cupid's beams;  
 To you I mourn, nor to the deaf I sing,  
 The woods shall answer, and their echo's ring;  
 The hills and rocks attend my doleful lay,  
 Why art thou prouder and more hard than they?  
 The bleating sheep with my complaints agree,  
 'They pant with heat, and I inflam'd by thee;  
 The sultry sirius burns the thirsty plains,  
 While in thy heart eternal winter reigns;  
 Where stray ye muses, in what lawn or grove,  
 While your Alexis pines in hopeless love.  
 In those fair fields where far-fam'd Isis glides,  
 Or else where Cam his winding vales divides?  
 As in the crystal stream I view my face,  
 Fresh blushes rising paint the wat'ry glass;  
 But since those graces please thy eyes no more,  
 I shun the fountains which I sought before;  
 Once I was skill'd in ev'ry herb that grew,  
 And ev'ry plant that drinks the morning dew:  
 Ah! wretched shepherd, what avails thy art,  
 To cure thy lambs, but not to heal thy heart.

Let other swains attend the rural care,  
 And fairer flocks, or richer fleeces share;  
 But nigh yon mountain let me tune my lays,  
 Embrace my love, and bind my brows with bays:  
 That flute is mine which Colin's tuneful breath,  
 Inspir'd when living, and bequeath'd in death;  
 He said, Alexis, take this pipe the same,  
 That taught the groves my Rosalinda's name;  
 But now the reeds shall hang on yonder tree,  
 For ever silent, since despis'd by thee.

And yet my numbers please the rural throng,  
 Rough satyrs dance, and Pan approves the song;  
 The nymphs forsaking ev'ry cave and spring,  
 Their early fruits, and milk white turtles bring!  
 Each am'rous nymph prefers her gifts in vain,  
 On you their gifts are all bestow'd again;  
 For you the swains the fairest flow'rs design,  
 And in one garland all their beauties join;  
 Accept the wreath which you deserve alone,  
 In whom all beauties are compris'd in one.

See what delights in sylvan scenes appear!  
 Descending gods have found elysium here.  
 In woods bright Venus with Adonis stray'd,  
 And chaste Diana haunts the forest's shade;  
 Come, lovely nymph, and bless the silent hours,  
 When swains from sheering seek their nightly bow'rs;  
 When weary reapers quit the sultry field,  
 And crown'd with corn their thanks to Ceres yield:  
 This harmless grove no lurking viper hides,  
 But in my breast the serpent love abides;  
 Here bees from blossoms sip the rosy dew,  
 But your Alexis knows no sweets but you:  
 Oh! deign to visit our forsaken seats,  
 The mossy fountain, and the green retreats!  
 Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade,  
 Trees where you sit, shall croud into a shade;  
 Where'er you tread, the blushing flow'rs shall rise,  
 And all things flourish where you turn your eyes;  
 Oh! how I long with you to pass my days,  
 Invoke the muses, and resound your praise!  
 Your praise the birds shall chaunt in ev'ry grove,  
 And winds shall waft it to the pow'rs above;

But

But would you sing, and rival Orpheus' strain,  
The wond'ring forests soon should dance again:  
The moving mountains hear the pow'ful call,  
And headlong streams hang list'ning in their fall.

But see the shepherds shun the noon-day heat,  
The lowing herds to murm'ring brooks retreat;  
To closer shades the panting flocks remove,  
Ye gods! and is there no relief for love.  
But soon the sun with milder rays descends,  
To the cool ocean, where his journey ends;  
On me love's fiercer flames for ever prey,  
By night he scorches, as he burns by day.

Our author was yet in his puerile age when he wrote this pastoral, and the ingenious Mr. Walfsh observes, that the verses are very tender and easy, and speak a judgment far exceeding the years of the writer. Nor did Virgil himself produce any thing of the kind so good at his age.

Our author appears to have imitated these three great writers in pastoral poetry, Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser; more particularly the Latin poet: but what he has mixed of his own is no way inferior to what he has taken from them. As will appear by considering a few lines of the above pastoral, with the antient originals from whence they were copied.

V. 1. *A shepherd's boy, he seeks no better name*] is manifestly [an imitation of Spenser.

*A shepherd's boy (no better do him call)*

V. 8. *And Jove consented.*]

Jupiter & lato descendet pluribus imbri.

VIRG.

V. 15.



366 THE PRINCIPLES, &c.

V. 15. *Nor to the deaf I sing,*

Non canimus surdis, respondent omnia sylva. id.

V. 16. *The woods shall answer, and their echoing]*

A verse out of Spenser's Epithalamion.

V. 23. *Where stray ye muses?*

Quæ nemora, aut qui vos saltus habuere puellæ,

Naidæ, indignæ cum gallus amore periret?

Nam neque parvas volis iuga, nam neque pendis,

Ulla moram fecere, neque nonia aganippæ.

Virgil out of Theocritus.

V. 27. *As in the chrystal stream, &c.]*

again from the cyclops of Theocritus.

nuper me in litore vidi

Cum placidum ventis staret more, non ego Daphnia

Judice te, metuum, si nunquam fallat imago.

Id.

V. 39. *Colin's tuneful breath,*

This is the name taken by Spenser in his eclogues, whom the author in the four following lines describes himself

as succeeding.

V. 40. *Bequeath'd in death, &c.]*

Est mihi disparibus septem compacta cicutis

Fistula, Dametas dono mihi quam dedit olim,

Et dixit moriens, te nunc habet ista secundum.

Id. Ecl.

V. 60. *Descending gods have found cypressum here.]*

Habitarunt di quoque sylvas.

Id.

Et formosus oves ad flumina pavit Adonis. Id. V.

V. 80. *And winds shall waft, &c.]*

Partem aliquam, venti, divum referatis ad aures.

V. 88. *Ye gods, &c.]*

Me tamen erit amor, quis cum meo datus addit amor.

